

# THE MUSLIM ELITE

by

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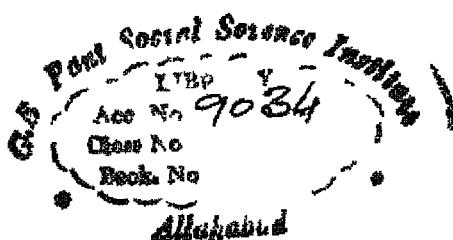
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# Preface

This book presents a portrait of Bihar's Muslim elite—its formation and character its role in the socio-cultural and political life and its interaction with the larger environment

Bihar has become notorious for its poverty and corruption, violence and brutality This is hardly an encouraging background for writing a book about such a state Its society and politics nevertheless reveal certain interesting characteristics in terms of interactions among castes and communities Much has been written about castes but little about the Muslim community in Bihar

This book is the study of the Muslim elite The status and the role of this elite in the history of modern Bihar demonstrates not only the characteristics of this elite but also the nature of its accommodation in a pluralist society This study highlights the simultaneous devotion of the Muslims to their community and country and their concern for their identity as a Muslim and as an Indian Anybody who reads about the annals of Bihar's Muslim Elite can have little doubt about their patriotism and about the pluralistic character of a society that allows accommodation of religious and linguistic diversities This study shows that the Muslims have taken full and constructive part in the national affairs of the state and have seldom allowed their concern for their religion or community to distract their attention from the national mainstream

The Muslims of Bihar share the burdens of backwardness as well as the fruits of progress and there is no question that their public interests are the same as those of the majority community This study shows that while they have nothing to be ashamed of any more than other social groups, they cannot abdicate their responsibility to make their own contribution to the promotion of wholesome public life in the state and in

the country. The Hindus and the Muslims, as well as other communities share a common fate though not a common faith, and must swim or sink together as inmates of the same ship of the state.

This study is neither an exhaustive history nor a comprehensive survey. Much of the material is based on secondary sources and oral history. There is a great scope for errors and omissions for which the responsibility rests entirely with the author. For whatever is worthy of merit the credit goes to the formal and informal interviews with many individuals whose help I deeply appreciate.

This book is based on the report of a research project conducted under the auspices of Indian Council of Social Science Research. Thanks are due to ICSSR for its financial assistance.

I dedicate this book to my mother and my wife who like one's religion and country create tensions, but are equally necessary for one's existence, survival and self fulfilment.

New Delhi  
April 1982

ALI ASHRAF

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## *Introduction*

The Muslim community in India has been the subject of great political and academic controversy. The culm nation of communal politics into a separatist movement and eventually into the partition of India added a tragic dimension to an already explosive issue. The partition however did not bring subcontinental tensions to an end. communal riots and the uncertain relations between India and her two Muslim neighbours are almost daily reminder of a phenomenon that is both a puzzle and a problem that remains still unresolved. a problem because of recurring communal flareups and a puzzle because behind these flareups is the quiet and continuous flow of the national mainstream based upon communal cooperation, friendship and co existence.

The aim of this study is to present the picture of Muslims in Bihar before and after independence—a picture that is striking in its combination of nationalism and community consciousness. In our attempt to do so we draw upon two kinds of data: the one based on history and the other on survey interviews. We seek to invoke historical evidence to demonstrate the status and role of Muslims in the social and political life of Bihar. The survey data is derived from the interviews of the most prominent and influential Muslim citizens of Bihar. Both the historical and survey materials demonstrate the salience of three features in the life of Bihar's Muslims: nationalism, secularism and communal adjustment and accommodation. The phenomenon of communal violence periodically marring the social life of Bihar is the proof of a pathological

deviance of an otherwise sane society and not the symptom of communal hatred and hostility

### **Perspective of the Study**

In order to understand the various aspects and implications of secularism and communalism it is necessary to appreciate different perspectives on the matter of communal identity itself. This raises questions regarding the validity or otherwise of religion as the basis of a community's identity and the various ways in which a religious community responds to the need for wider national integration in a plural society. It would appear that the key to an understanding of the communal problem in Indian politics lies in an answer to the question of religion as a basis of group identity.

There have been several perspectives or approaches to this problem of religious identity. The Marxists tend to dismiss as irrelevant factors other than class consciousness as the basis of politics. One could however argue the validity of religious affiliation as an empirically real source of identity and the possibility of integrating it with other political goals. Indeed even the Marxists and communists at times concede the revolutionary role of Islam as a force against imperialism, injustice and inequality. As a Soviet writer says, 'More conspicuous now are these aspects of Islam which were deliberately glossed over by foreign and local exploiters but which had considerable attraction for the broad masses having no scientific world outlook. We mean justice among other things. For the toiling Muslims this concept was and remains one of Islam's fundamental principles. It appeals to millions of the destitute and oppressed people that Islam advocates equality, temperance and condemnation of corruption, theft and usury'.<sup>1</sup> The author further says, 'The fact that in our time religious and nationalist slogans still have rather strong influence in some liberated countries is due to the mobilizing role they played during anti-colonialist struggles. These slogans served as an ideological platform unifying diverse social and ethnic groups

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<sup>1</sup> I. Leonid Medvedko, *Liberation, Revolutions and Islam, Socialism, Soviet Monthly Digest*, May 1980, Moscow, p. 15.



professing one and the same religion and vouching with the boundaries of one state or region

The secularists of the variety of A B Shah and Hamid Dalvi outdo the Marxists in their repudiation of religion as a factor in public life. One would have thought that the secularists unlike the Marxists were interested in the liberalization or modernization of religion rather than its repudiation. However it appears from the writings of a secularist like A B Shah that nothing short of complete denunciation of religion specially of Islam would satisfy him. A B Shah for instance takes objection to the following statement of Professor M. Mujeeb a well known liberal secular and modern muslim. It is the author's firm belief that the Indian Muslims have in their religion of Islam the most reliable standards of judgement, and they do not need to look elsewhere to discover how high or low they stand. Likewise Hamid Dalvi picks up stray episodes in the lunatic fringe of the Muslim society and depicts it as the mind of the Indian Muslims.<sup>2</sup> Secularists such as Shah and Dalvi have certain stereotype of the religion of Islam and are engaged in a quixotic fight against their imaginary windmills of Islamic monstrosity. Such secularists suffer from what S. Radhakrishnan calls 'rootless secularism'.<sup>3</sup>

The Marxist and the secularist could still argue that there is a lot of obscurantism and traditional orthodoxy which militate against the development of a modern secular and democratic or classless society. This argument receives negative reinforcement from the revivalist and fundamentalist movements in Islam. Orthodoxy the third perspective tends to ignore the original spirit of religion and to focus more on the rites and rituals and thus precludes the possibility of meaningful and creative adaptation to the demands and challenges of new circumstances as they arise and call for suitable adjustment. Orthodoxy is more interested in the preservation of the

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2 *Ibid* p 16

3 Hamid Dalvi *Muslims Politics in Secular India* Hind Pocket Books Delhi 1968

4 S. Radhakrishnan *Religion and Society* George Allen and Unwin Ltd London second edition p 23

traditional laws and institutions which may indeed have lost their relevance and become obsolete. The more ominous danger from religious fundamentalism arises from the equation that it seeks to establish between religion and state. In their zeal to establish rule of faith or the kingdom of God on earth the fundamentalists take to radical politics based on priestly rule abolition of dissent and the imposition of a cultural regimentation. Such fundamentalism is not only against modern concepts of democracy secularism and human rights but also unwarranted by the tenets of religion itself. Maulana Wahiduddin Khan among others has pointed out the fallacy of the political philosophy of Abul Ala Maudoodi and Jamat-e-Islami<sup>5</sup> concerning the doctrine of the establishment of faith. This doctrine is bound to end up in the totalitarian tyranny of a public order based upon organized bigotry.

This leads to another perspective that religion is important, that it is significant as any other primordial affinity that, like land or language it provides the basis for one's identity that this identity is authentic and as vital as ethnicity or nationality that it need not exclude other loyalties and there is room for religious diversity in a political system. Secularism as we practise it in India does not reject religion but is committed to equal status of all religions. Our democracy also recognizes the right to religious freedom with social and cultural pluralism. There is a growing realization that religion properly understood is not irreconcilable with modernity either. Indeed it can be further said that modernization imposed from outside as an alien plant cannot be vital or durable and even if it survived it would cause distortions in the native culture that without anchorage into indigenous roots modernization would degenerate into a superficial and false veneer of culture. Indeed it is one's religion, language and culture that provide such an anchorage and prevent the alienation of man from his own cultural social roots. These views could be considered the ideological core of Mahatma Gandhi's social, political and moral ideas and the deepest legacy of the Indian National

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<sup>5</sup> Maulana Wahiduddin Khan *Tabir ki Ghalti* Jamiat Building, Qasimpur Street, Delhi

Congress throughout the vicissitudes of its life. Radhakrishnan says "Civilization is a way of life, a mode of life of the human spirit. Its essence lies not in any kind of community of race or in political and economic arrangements but in the values that create and sustain them. The politico-economic structure is the framework intended to give expression to the passionate loyalty and allegiance of the people to the vision and values of life which they accept. Every civilization is the expression of a religion, for religion signifies faith in absolute values and a way of life to realize them."

This is the basis of our version of secularism that recognizes the equality of all religions as well as the separation of religion from politics without denying religion its due and legitimate place in the individual, social and cultural life.

This is the underlying perspective of this work also. We subscribe neither to the Marxist-secularist denunciation of religion nor to the fundamentalist equation of religion with state. It would be wrong to say that 'religion as such' was responsible for communalism in India. Any other ethnic factor—race, language and soil—could be the cause of communal animosity but none of these can be renounced. We maintain that the religious identity need not be the cause of communalism or separatism. Religion as well as race or language can be exploited to promote political objectives but religious identity per-se is not in conflict with the demands of nationalism, democracy or secularism. Religion and language are the sources of deepest bonds. So is the nation. It is not necessary that the sense of community identity should result in a sense of superiority or separation. Most problems of life arise from extremism but extremism is not the monopoly of religion alone. Class consciousness, national fanaticism or ethnic chauvinism can tear human beings and groups to pieces as much as religious bigotry can do.

The critics against religion fail to take into account the change taking place in religion and society; they indeed continue to fight against the strawman of their own creation.

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6 S. Radhakrishnan, *Religion and Society* (George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London, second edition 1948, p. 21).

One can argue that the controversy between secularism and religion is based on a vulgar notion of both. To quote Radhakrishnan again. The problem today relates not to the incredible dogmas of religion but to the place of spiritual in universe which cannot be explained altogether by science.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Rationale of the Study**

A legitimate concern for justice and equality for all men irrespective of caste creed religion or language has led to an erroneous belief that justice and equality are incompatible with group identity. This error has specially coloured the general attitude towards the question of religious identity that is summarily dismissed as communalism. The history of partition is mainly responsible for this but there is also a respectable ideological approach that frowns upon any idea of attachment with religion language or region and caste. But as in many other spheres of life which show one's forte for co-existence while the intellectuals have talked about a modernist progressive ideology our more pragmatic politicians and people have pursued sometimes wisely sometimes foolishly the practical course of reconciling group interests in a broad main stream of national life and politics. Indeed looking back at the practical political history of our country since independence one cannot but be struck by the fact that the central political issue in India has been not how to resolve class conflict but how to accommodate different groups based on the affiliation of language region caste and tribes. One must therefore seek to understand the phenomena of group identity and group adjustment in order to appreciate the main focus and thrust of political development in free India. It is an unfortunate legacy of the separatist politics and communal movement for the partition of the country that creates a reflex action of apprehension and opposition to an appreciation of the group phenomena in the political process specially pertaining to religion.

There are however two points to be remembered. First, in free India the study of a particular community is as legitimate as the study of a caste religious or linguistic group and its cultural economic or political problems. No one has

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<sup>7</sup> S. Radhakrishnan, *ibid.*, p. 40.

criticised the study of caste and caste relations on the ground that such a study would exacerbate caste animosity and there can be no valid objection to a scientific study of the Muslim community. Indeed knowledge of the various ethnic, religious and linguistic groups should be welcomed as a source of insight into the mind and behaviour of such groups. Such knowledge is expected to contribute to a better understanding of various communities in a pluralistic society and polity that India is.

Secondly Bihar presents a pattern of communal relations that is different from what obtained in U P where Hindu Muslim hostility was at the root of separatist politics that eventually led to the partition of India. In Bengal, the communal tension arose due to the cultural and economic dominance of the Hindu zamindars over a backward and poor Muslim peasantry whereas in U P the communal rivalry and tension arose out of the cultural and religious resurgence associated with the Muslims' desire to defend their privileges against the increasing assertion and competition of the Hindus. In Bihar on the other hand there was a remarkable tradition of communal adjustment that was not seriously jeopardized until the world war II by separatist politics of India. This is a very important and rather neglected aspect of the political life of Bihar and of the history of national movement.

The purpose of this work is to present a case study of the Muslim elite of Bihar in order to discuss their identity, social characteristics and their perception of the Muslim community in the national context. This case study further throws light on the manner in which the Muslims have fared in Bihar in terms of maintaining their cultural identity, social status and political standing. The question of the identity and the achievement of the Muslim elite reflects the general trend in the status of the Muslim community and is discussed both historically as well as empirically through a survey of selected Muslims who have achieved success and influence in their life. Historically the Muslims enjoyed a secure place in the province of Bihar. The cultural, educational and bureaucratic as well as public eminence of a large number of Muslims was matched only by the Kayasthas before independence. Since indepen-

dence Muslims have established themselves again initial setback following partition and emigration to India. Indeed there has been considerable social change the rise of some backward castes to high position in services and professions. The documentation of all this is not only informative but also instructive in showing the Muslims can maintain their cultural identity and social status as citizens of India.

Besides the historical analysis of the Muslim elite, social change in the Muslim community the survey of contemporary elite from various walks of life reveals information and the outlook of the representatives of the community. This should give an insight into the community as reflected in its elites. The question raised is if the elite represents the masses. Where the centre of the mind and thought of a community is concerned, it is safe to surmise that the elite reflects the community. The elite at any rate do not have opinions on all the issues of the community or even the country and it is the elite who formulate the issues and articulate the opinions. Public opinion is seldom democratic in the sense that it is mass opinion; indeed the opinion of the public that is of the conscious active segment of the society. Likewise the community is not the opinion of all its members, but the opinion of the active members, i.e. the elite.

### The Elite

This study seeks to identify the Muslim Elite of Bombay, describe their personal and social characteristics and their views on issues of modernization and political and economic change.

We propose to deal with three basic issues. The first is the matter of elite, the concept and its relevance, the second is the question of identification of the elite, and the third is the objectives of this study.

The concept of 'elite' has figured very prominently in modern literature dealing with politics and sociology. Elitists, beginning with Mosca and Pareto have maintained the inevitability and the desirability of the elite rule. The elite is the leading minority in a society, or the dominant segment.

a society, and it is only natural inevitable and also desirable that this minority should and indeed often does provide leadership and occupies a position of command. There are books galore dealing with the theoretical and empirical analysis of the elite. There are however certain issues on which the elitists are divided, and it is necessary to take stock of them in order to understand the use of the term in this study.

The elitists have disagreed on the basis of formation of the elite. What does the elite represent? Here the elite theories can be conveniently divided into the Machiavellian and the Marxist. The Machiavellians focus upon the personal qualities and skills of leaders who attain power in society; the Marxists attribute such power to the ownership and control of economic resources. The elite in the Marxist sense is a function of the class that owns the means of production and exchange. Reduced to bare bones the question boils down to whether it is personality or wealth that leads to influence, power and authority in society. History provides persons of exceptional qualities such as Lincoln, Lenin and Mohandas Gandhi who provided leadership to their people on the basis of their personal charisma and moral authority. All societies on the other hand are characterised by some kind of stratifications—there are upper and lower classes—and most of influence and wealth belong to the upper class. The Brahmin—whether Maithil, 'Boston' or managerial—is a fact of life in all complex social systems. Thus between leaders of exceptional personality and the Bourgeoisie or the Brahmin, the elite may be formed by both the personality factors and the class or caste factors based on the stratification system. The circulation of elite would be real only when personal attainments are allowed to establish their claims, on the other hand such circulation of elite can hardly destroy the stratification system altogether. An elite is anchored in an aristocracy oligarchy or political and managerial class.

Whatever the basis the social formation of the elite provides an insight into the structure and the culture of a society. The composition of the elite also throws light on its character and its relationship with the rest of the society. Is the elite socially homogeneous and cohesive and politically

united to maintain a stronghold on the society.' This is a crucial question regarding a social and political system. Feudalism helped to maintain a higher degree of social homogeneity, cohesion and class consciousness of the nobility that controlled all the levers of power—resources were cumulative. With the rise of modern industrial urban society and with the growth of professions and the proliferation of social forces, it is doubtful if an elite system of feudal variety can long survive. With extensive specialization and division of labour in modern times there is a tendency towards social pluralism and personal and professional achievement and competition among variety of groups and parties. With the increase in affluence signs of class distinctions are apt to lose their salience; they are less gross and more subtle. In this the emergence and transformation of social forces plays a key role and as Mosca pointed out the viability of the elite is related to the leadership of these social forces.

Reference must also be made to another issue in the elite theories. The classical elitists have been both anti-democratic and anti-socialist. They were anti-democratic in rejecting the notion of popular sovereignty and in dismissing the people as capable and worthy of self-government. Both Pareto and Mosca, avowedly anti-democratic, believed in the fact and the value of a minority that has the qualities to rule and lead a society. A slightly different version offered by Robert Michels maintains that it is in the nature of an organization that a minority should be in the position of command. The decision-making process, information processing and the complexity of formal organizations precludes the possibility of democratic participation in the management of an organization. Even political parties dedicated to democracy and socialism show the same tendency towards the centralization of power in a leading minority. Indeed the emergence of the managerial class is a universal phenomenon irrespective of political ideology or the form of political system, and this class has become the prototype of the modern elite in an industrially advanced country. The implications of Michels' argument are clear in dismissing the notion of a classless society free from all distinctions.

Besides these neo-Machiavellians and the classical elitists



there are other elite theorists who use the elitist arguments not to oppose classical liberalism or social democracy but bringing a touch of realism in recognizing the limits on democracy imposed either by social stratification or organizational structure of modern society. They thus recognize the inevitability and even the need for a minority to acquire expertise, excellence or eminence. Democracy, according to them, must recognize the reality of this fact and then strive to ensure that power does not become irresponsible and leadership does not degenerate into despotism. Consultation and consent are important in democracy, not as the basis of decisions per se but of the selection of decision makers only. Schumpeter and Lasswell are examples of that category of thinkers who subscribe to this view.

### **The Muslim Elite**

In this study the elite refers to such individuals as are reputed to be successful in their sphere of activity and influential in the society at large. These are the prominent members of the Muslim community widely known as successful and influential who are looked upon as sources of imitation and inspiration and even succour and support. They come from various walks of life—agriculture, business and civil service, professions and politics. They are certainly not a monolithic group; they are neither homogenous nor cohesive; they do not have common affiliation, ideological or political; they are divided occupationally, socially, ideologically and politically. What is common among them is that they are successful and influential in their life.

This study seeks to describe the Muslim elite who wield influence at the societal or governmental level, who are leaders of their community, constituency or in particular fields of activity such as education, profession or civil service. As to the composition of the elite, there is on the one hand the very broad definition as the best of any group or trade; on the other hand, there is the narrow connotation of the elite as the governing elite. In the first view of the elite, it is the excellence of talent or skill that is essential; in the second, it is the command of power. The second category is succinctly

described by Lasswell Lerner and Rothwell in the following words

The political elite comprise the power holders of the body politic. The power holders include the leadership and the social formations from which leaders typically come and to which accountability is maintained during a given generation. In other words, the political elite is the power class.<sup>8</sup>

In this study the term elite combines the quality of excellence with influence. An attempt has been made to identify such prominent Muslim individuals as are known to be successful and influential. Being successful in their trade career or profession was considered as a necessary condition for being designated as a member of the elite. It was however considered not a sufficient condition and an element of public character or role was further stipulated as another dimension of the elite. There was no intention of imputing leadership role to these individuals especially when leadership is associated narrowly with the political netalog. Not all the elite accordingly are political in the popular sense of the term; most of them are indeed not political activists. All of them however are perceived as social notables and are widely known as prominent members or representatives of the community.

### Objectives

We seek to explore a number of questions in order to understand the phenomenon of Muslim elite in Bihar. Who are these persons? How do they rise to their position of eminence? What interests do they represent? and what are their opinions and attitudes regarding issues of social change and political development? Thus with the help of these inquiries the chief aim was to identify the Muslim elite and study their formation, modernization and ideas on public and political issues facing the community and the country. With these broad concerns in mind, the specific objectives of this study are to analyse the following

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8. J. Lasswell, David Lerner and Eastor Rothwell: *The Elite Concept, Introductory Readings in Political Behaviour* Read Mc Nally and Co, Chicago, 1961, p. 429.

- 1 The social formation of the Muslim elite in terms of social background and changing characteristics
- 2 The elite perceptions expectations and achievement regarding self, community and country
- 3 The elite attitudes and orientations towards social change in terms of (a) personal laws (b) status of women and (c) family planning
- 4 The elite attitudes and orientations towards political values such as (a) secularism (b) democracy and (c) nationalism
- 5 The nature of political role and participation in public life and institutions

### **Methodology**

The survey data of this study are derived from formal interviews with three hundred members of the Muslim elite. The survey was conducted with the help of a schedule containing items on attitudes and perceptions concerning the objectives of inquiry. The schedule was personally administered to all the selected individuals except three so that the analysis of data is based on the survey responses of two hundred ninetyseven respondents.

In a study of this type the identification of the elite was a most crucial question. There are in vogue alternative methods of identifying the elite. The argument goes on mainly between two approaches identification on the basis of position or reputation. Formal position alone does not take care of the informal centres of influence and yet formal position does represent some achievement and success. In this study in particular which is not based on one dimension of power the formal position wherever relevant or applicable was necessary. However such social notables as figured prominently in the public life are also included.

At the outset the elite to be identified were divided into the following categories

- 1 Legislators, party leaders and public servants
- 2 Lawyers doctors engineers, teachers and journalists
- 3 Leaders of business and labour unions

- 4 Leaders of social and religious organizations
- 5 Student leaders

The next step was to identify the prominent members the elite in each group. It was obviously wellnigh impossible for one individual to perform this task of identification. There was also no formal record of individuals in the above categories on the basis of which selection could be made. The only feasible and sound method was to entrust the task to a few knowledgeable individuals to serve as a panel of judges to pick up and rank such members of each group as were known to wield influence in the community or the public life. Six judges were accordingly selected from various parts of the state so as to avoid over representation of one region and the under representation of another. The judges proved not only knowledgeable but also dependable and furnished us with their list of individuals in order of importance as perceived by them. It could be argued that the judges' perceptions were bound to be subjective and therefore inherently biased in the identification of the elite. Reputation is undoubtedly subjective but we took some care to minimise the risks of subjectivity. We decided to select first the names common in the lists of all the six judges, then the names common in that of the five judges, and so on until we got down to names which had at least two nominations.

Thus with the help of six judges located in different parts of the State and on the basis of six lists of prominent individuals ranked in order of importance in each of the several groups we believe that enough was done to secure a list of most prominent, successful and influential Muslim citizens of Bihar.

It needs to be pointed out that this size of the elite is no ordinary sample. It is not a question of picking a representative sample of a given universe of the elite. Unlike the universe of say voters, there was no question of a large universe of the Muslim elite. In the state of Bihar what we identified as the elite represented the elite and this was indeed the universe itself.

In the final tally the following categories with their respective numbers were interviewed

Political leaders	56
Civil servants	34
Doctors Engineers	45
Lawyers Teachers	61
Business & Labour	37
Religious and Social Workers	31
Students Leaders	33
	<hr/>
Total	297
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In addition to the survey of the elite specially undertaken for this study this work draws upon the published materials in connection with the various movements and organizations of the Muslims in Bihar. These provide the much needed context and also highlight the main issues in the socio-cultural economic and political life of the Muslims in a manner in which mere survey data cannot do. We have sought to describe in each chapter the relevant social matrix of the themes concerned. We for example include discussion of the social forces and social change along with social values and modernization in the belief that a mere survey of values, belief and attitudes does not fully illuminate the reality of social life. Likewise we deal with the tenor of Muslim participation in state politics before we present the data on political values and opinions. This we believe is an important device by which we can understand the mind of the community and its elite against the background of historical reality.

We have also made an attempt to include biographical sketches of the prominent Muslims who have made distinguished contributions to social, cultural and public life of Bihar. These biographies are presented in a chronological order so as to give an idea of the progress and development of Muslim culture and politics from the pioneers of modern education to the contemporary social and public workers. In the life of these stalwarts one can observe the catholicity of mind at once open to modernization and yet deeply concerned with cultural

roots of the community and endowed with a healthy commitment to both the land of their birth and the faith of their fathers. One can also observe in these lives not only the intellectual and moral qualities but also a lofty spirit of public service. They are truly the elite endowed with the vision and the will to set an example and show the way to posterity.

## *Formation of Bihar and Freedom Struggle*

Bihar is extraordinarily rich in its cultural traditions and natural resources. From the ancient times to the modern it has continuously made magnificent contribution to the culture and politics of the country. It is famous for its contributions to Sanskrit learning and Pali literature to Maithili and Bhojpur and Hindi and Urdu. There is a Sanskrit University at Darbhanga, the seat of the erstwhile Darbhanga Raj and Maithili culture. The devotion of Maithil Pandits to scholarship is proverbial; the Maithil traditions go back to Raja Janak and his daughter Sita, the faithful spouse of Rama. The poet Vidyapati and the scholar Sir Ganga Nath Jha, and many other illustrious figures of modern Bihar were Maithils.

Bihar has also nurtured the virile Bhojpur language and its popular folksongs. In Babu Kunwar Singh Bhojpur produced one of the first freedom fighters of 1857, and Bhojpur also produced Dr. Sachidanand Sinha, one of the makers of modern Bihar and the first president of the Constituent Assembly of free India.

Gautam Buddha and Mahavir, the founders respectively of Buddhism and Jainism, found enlightenment in Bihar and the holy places of Bodhi Gaya and Rajgir continue to attract pilgrims from all parts of the country and outside. Patna, the capital of Bihar, was at one time Patliputra, the headquarters of Maurya Empire and Kautilya wrote his famous Arthashastra on the banks of river Ganga in Patliputra. The university of

Nalanda was among the few international centres of learning in the ancient world. Ashoka, Sher Shah and Rajendra Prasad were the distinguished sons of Bihar and among the most famous personalities dedicated to the service of the whole country. The Adibasis of south Bihar also produced a great sage and leader – Birsa Bhagwan during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

During the medieval times Bihar became an important outpost of the Muslim rule in Delhi and of the Muslim civilization in India. Sher Shah, the Pathan soldier from Sahsaram Bihar, drove Humayun out of India and almost succeeded in destroying the Mughul Empire. Mir Qasim rose in revolt and carried out his operations against the British from his fort in Monghyr. Patna was an important centre of the Wahabi and the Khilafat movements both of which though inspired primarily by religious considerations were anti-imperialist. The religious institutions at Maner, Bihar Sharif, Phulwarisharif and Monghyr were great centres of Islamic instruction and guidance and Sulaiman Nadwi, the historian of Islam, Shad Azimabadi, a venerable Urdu poet, Khuda Baksh Khan, whose private collections formed the basis of the world famous Oriental library at Patna, and the galaxy of renowned scholars such as Syed Monazir Ahsan Gilani, Nawab Nasir Hussain Khayal, Maulana Sulaiman Ashraf, Head, Department of Theology, Aligarh Muslim University, Yagana Changezi, Azimabadi, born in Patna and settled in Lucknow, Maulana Ataullah Shah Bukhari, Amir Shariat Punjab, born in Patna, but settled in Punjab, Maulana S. Shah, Sulaiman, Phulwarvi, Syed Hasan Askari, Qazi Abdul Wadood, Kalimuddin Ahmed, and Jamil Mazhari, have made outstanding contributions to the composite culture of India.

### **The Wahabi Movement**

Land and language as well as race and religion are the primordial sources of social affinity and political cohesion. Sons of the soil with roots in the common territory have common experience of a life shared together and the community of experience and aspirations is not limited to the identity of race, religion or even language. Patriotism is essentially anchored in the common attachment to one's land of birth.



but it also comprehends and contains other identities based on race, religion and language. The virtue of citizenship consists in the right ordering of loyalties and patriotism does not always exclude caste, community or linguistic consciousness.

Modern Indian history is often looked upon as a conflict between Islam and nationalism. It must be admitted that the notion of Muslim separation lends credibility to the idea of irreconcilability between the Muslim Indians' patriotism and the Indian Muslims' religion. Islam undoubtedly has been a potent force in the political history of India and while in recent past it has been used as a factor in communal separatism, it has also made its contributions to the evolution of an Indian Hindustani nation and to the struggle against imperialism. One must therefore turn to the religion and culture of Muslims in order to understand the sources of their political inspiration and activities.

It was not only the Muslims but also the British who found it difficult to forget the fact that the British Raj succeeded the Mughal Empire in India. Both the secular and the religious impulses of the Muslims combined to generate in them widespread and deep hostility against the British rule. The movement started by the religious sage and leader Shah Waliullah paved the way for an anti-imperialist crusade which was actively led by Syed Ahmed Shahid and whose chief centres were Peshawar and Patna, now the capital of Bihar. Sadiqpur in Patna city was the centre of Wahabi movement that aimed at religious reform of Islam and political revolt against the British. Moulvi Vilayat Ali, Moulvi Inayat Ali and Moulvi Abdullah Azimabadi—all of Patna—carried on the work of Syed Ahmed Shahid and Patna was the centre of both religious and political activities unparalleled in those days anywhere in India. After the martyrdom of Syed Ahmed Shahid in 1831 and after departure of the family of Shah Waliullah in 1841 to Arabia, the mantle of religious and political leadership fell on the shoulders of brothers Vilayat Ali and Inayat Ali who showed remarkable courage, dedication and sacrifice to the cause of Islamic and anti-British programme. And Patna continued to be an active centre of such activities even after the Revolt of 1857.

Referring to the Wahabi movement K K Dutta writes 'that a notable feature of the Wahabi organisational work was the promotion of a corporate and civic spirit among the villagers and the attitude of civil disobedience to the government. People were exhorted not to take their cases to government courts but get them settled by panchayat like bodies and also not to seek employment under the government.'

The brothers Vilayat Ali and Inayat Ali died in the frontier in 1852 and 1858 respectively. Moulvi Abdullah, the son of Moulvi Vilayat Ali carried on the work of his father and uncle and continued to be the Amire Majaheeden till 1902 when he died. Patna was the centre of Anti British activities—the centre of recruitment of Majaheeden and the collection of funds from all parts of India including distant places in Bengal and Madras. The British instituted legal cases against many freedom fighters in alleged conspiracy cases. Moulvi Yahaya Ali brother-in-law of Moulvi Inayat Ali and latter's son Moulvi Abdur Rahim were involved in the Ambala conspiracy case. Abdur Rahim was released in 1883 and lived until 1923. Gradually however the Muslims came to the conclusion that they had to come to terms with the British Raj and the English education and the publication of Sir William Hunter's book the Indian Musalmans also heralded a change in the British policy towards the Muslims. Md Hasan, the son of Maulana Vilayat Ali was awarded title of Shamsululema, and Amjad Ali the son of Maulana Yahaya Ali studied English and became a professor in Muir Central College. These symbolized the process of adaptation to English education which spread steadily among the Muslim elite but which does not appear to have extinguished their passionate concern for their self respect and freedom.

### **The Formation of Bihar Province**

Nature has endowed Bihar with its bounty in a measure that should make any land rich and beautiful. The rich fertile plains of North Bihar inundated by a number of rivers including Ganga, Gandak and Sone are part of the vast Gangetic

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K. K. Dutta, *A Comprehensive History of Bihar* K. P. Jaiswal Institute, Patna, 1976, p. 299.

plains famous for the fertile alluvial soil. South Bihar is rich in mineral resources and forests. Taken together the north and south Bihar have economic potential of great magnitude. And yet Bihar has been a land of poverty amidst plenty. The advent of the British caused the colonial exploitation and impoverishment of traditional arts and crafts without the benefits of English education and employment to the people of Bihar. The permanent settlement introduced the zamindari system and undermined the peasantry. Education and services and professions were almost monopolized by the Bengalees who dominated Bihar as it continued to be part of Bengal until 1912.

V C P Chaudhry<sup>2</sup> has shown the imbalance and disparity in the socio-economic conditions and employment of the Bengalis and Biharis. There is ample evidence to testify to the fact that relative backwardness of Bihar was due to the lack of opportunities for education and employment as well as the exploitation of the agricultural sector. Sir John Strachy commented on the plight of Bihar in the following words. In Bihar the case is more serious. There is hardly any area of British India possessing greater natural advantages of soil and climate and no part where the condition of the agricultural population is more precarious or the margin of subsistence smaller.<sup>3</sup> In so far as the fellowship in the university and employment in government administration was concerned the Bihar Times mentioned that We find that while the name of Bengalis and Europeans may be counted by scores in the list of fellows there are only five Biharis all Mohammadians.<sup>4</sup>

The employment situation can be understood from the following table.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Biharis*

Total appointments				Appointments of Biharis											
Year	Deputy Collector	Sub-Deputy Collector	Total	D	C	S	D	C	Total	D	C	S	D	C	Total
1895	7	17	24	1	3			4		1		1		2	
1896	7	17	24	1	3			4		1		2		3	
1897	7	7	14	1	3			4		0		1		1	
1898	5	5	9	1	0			1		0		1		1	
Total	26	46	71	4	9			13		2		5		7	

<sup>2</sup> V C P Chaudhry *The Creation of Modern Bihar* Patna.

<sup>3</sup> Sir John Strachy quoted in V C P Choudhry op cit p 26.

<sup>4</sup> *The Bihar Times* 15-1899

<sup>5</sup> Choudhry op cit p 72

Out of the total appointments—71 made in four years only 20 were Biharis and out of these 20 thirteen were Muslims and seven were Hindus. Thus it is clear that the Bihar Hindu got much less of jobs than their percentage of population and were aggrieved.

It was not only economic and professional dissatisfaction but also the sense of cultural loss that tormented the people of Bihar. Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, an eminent scholar of Bihar expressed the feelings of cultural deprivation in the following words:

Among the elite the value of native language declined, correspondence between friends, conversation at home, writings and speeches were all conducted in English. It would not be an exaggeration to say that to speak in one's vernacular was considered degrading. This condition lasted for over half a century during which the cultural heritage was ruined, the spirit of service to one's native tongue evaporated, the teachers in English schools were mostly Bengalis who spoke bad Hindustani and influenced their students. During this period, but for the untiring zeal and efforts of Qazi Reza Hussain and his associates, there could be no remnants of the cultural legacy.\*

The British introduced English and Western education and Calcutta being the centre of British trade under East India Company and the capital of British India, after the 1857 revolt the Bengalis were the earliest beneficiaries of English Education. The Muslims of India in general awakened to the benefits of English education late and there was a good deal of opposition to the English and Western education among the Muslims specially of the United Provinces. The Muslims of Bihar however awakened to the charm of English education even before the Revolt of 1857 and several Muslims held important posts under the East India Company—the most notable of these were Syed Wajid Hussain, the grand father of Sir Ali Imam, Dewan Maula Baksh, Col. Safdar Ali and Nawab Bahadur Ali Khan. The first three Biharis to go to England were Sharfuddin, Nurul Huda and Ahsanuddin Ahmed who returned from abroad in 1880. These three and Shamsul

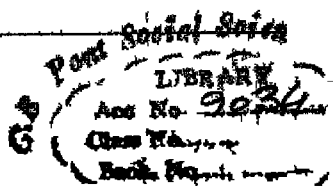
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\* Syed Sulaiman Nadwi, NADIM Bihar Number

Ulama Maulvi Mohd Hussain Sadiqupurī Qazī Raza Hussain Nawab Imdad Hussain Khan and Khudr Baksh Khan are pioneers of modern education among Muslims and extended full support to Sir Sayyid's campaign in favour of English education. Consequently in the present century the educated families of Muslims occupied a secure and decent place in the cultural economic and political life of Bihar and felt neither discouragement nor inhibition in comparison to the Hindus. The Kayasthas as well as the Muslim awakened to the need for the revival of a new spirit of Bihar's identity and together worked for the formation of a separate province of Bihar.

The sense of discrimination and deprivation as well as the erosion of cultural identity on account of the imperial rule and the Bengali dominance afflicted the Biharis especially those few who were receiving the English education. A movement for the separation of Bihar from Bengal began to stir and Kayasthas such as Mahesh Narayan and Sachidanand Sinha took the initiative to organize this movement. The need for Biharī students and advocates to go to Calcutta for education and practice was proving galling and the students began to organize themselves. It was proposed in the Biharī Club Calcutta to have a students conference and the first such conference met in 1906 under the presidentship of Justice Sharfuddin.

K. K. Datta writes that 'Mohammadens got English education and before the advent of Bengalees such offices in Bihar were held by the Mohammedens. It is the Mohammedens therefore who first raised the slogan of 'Bihar for the Biharis' a slogan which was picked up by Biharī Hindus, particularly the Kayasthas when after making some progress in education they found the prospect of their employment blocked'. The first session of Bihar Provincial Conference was held at Patna in April 1908 under the presidentship of Mr Ali Imam and a resolution for the separation of Bihar from Bengal was moved by Mr Mohd Fakhruddin. The proposal for the separation of Bihar from Bengal and the shifting of India's capital from Calcutta to Delhi was approved in 1911 by the Government.



of India when Sir Ali Imam was a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council Bihar was formed a separate province in 1912

### The Struggle for Freedom

A characteristic of Muslim participation in the national movement was the combination of secular nationalism and community consciousness. The partition of Bengal was considered a favour to the Muslims of Bengal but it failed to arouse much interest in the Bihar Muslims and the annulment of the partition of Bengal did not move them either. The Muslims of Bihar were far more interested in the separation of Bihar from Bengal and later concerned over the Balkan wars and the treatment meted to the Ottoman Empire. This amalgam of secular interest and religious concern may appear curious but is useful in understanding the Muslim mind. This quality is also reflected in the ease with which the Muslim leaders commuted between the Muslim League and the Indian National Congress and they were sincere to both. It would appear that Muslims were concerned for their country as much as for their community. Giants like Sir Ali Imam and Moulana Mazharul Haque with unquestional attachment to secularism and patriotism were associated with both the Congress and the League.

From the earliest days of the Congress there was great enthusiasm and a large number of delegates used to attend them. Bihar was allotted five seats in AICC of Congress. At this critical period in our nation's history communalism fostered by an alien government was tending to cause discord in the Indian national life. The Muslim leaders of Bihar being men of essentially liberal view and cosmopolitan outlook staunchly stood for nationalism even if they were associated with Muslim League. While presiding over the session of the Muslim League held at Amritsar on the 30th December 1908 Sir Ali Imam made a highly significant observation 'we the educated Musalman of India have no less love for the land of our birth than the members of other communities inhabiting in the country. We are tied to her by the sacred association of ages and we yield to none in our veneration and affection for our motherland' <sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Quoted in K. K. Dutta, *Freedom Movement in Bihar, Government of Bihar, 1937*, p. 153.

At Sonapur in 1908 a meeting was held under the presidency of Nawab Sarfaraz Husain Khan Bahadur and a Provincial Congress Committee was formed. Among its Muslim office bearers were President Syed Hasan Imam, Vice Presidents Mazharul Haque and Khan Bahadur Sarfaraz Husain Khan, and Secretary S. Najmul Huda. In the next Congress session at Madras Bihar was represented by six delegates out of whom two were Muslims—S. Hasan Imam and S. Najmul Huda. The first session of Bihar Provincial Conference at Patna in 1908 was chaired by Hasan Imam.

That the Bihar Muslims took an active interest in the national struggle for freedom is demonstrated by a number of facts relating to the different phases of the national movement such as the non-cooperation movement, the Nehru Report and the Assembly Election of 1937. The Provincial Congress Committee of Bihar as represented by its President Sachidanand Sinha and its secretary Chandra Bani Sahay was opposed to the non-cooperation movement. The young Muslim members of the Congress decided that the Provincial Congress Committee should not be in the hands of opponents of non-cooperation and those delegates should represent Bihar in the All India Congress Committee (the Indian National Congress) who would support non-cooperation. Many Muslims became members of the Indian National Congress by paying the membership fee of Rs 10/- and when elections of delegates took place not a single candidate opposed to non-cooperation was elected to the All India Congress Committee. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad lived in Ranchi in those days, and it was from Bihar that he was for the first time elected to the membership of All India Congress Committee. It is noteworthy that Jayaprakash Narayan and some other students decided to leave college in response to a moving speech of Abul Kalam Azad who according to J.P. set fire in the Ganga.

It is interesting to observe that when Mahatma Gandhi presented his Resolution of Non-cooperation in April 1920 at the Khilafat meeting at Allahabad the All India Congress Committee deferred the matter and decided to call a special session of the Congress in Calcutta to resolve the issue of non-

cooperation. However even before the proposed special session Rajendra Prasad agreed to accept Maulana Shaukat Ali's resolution in favour of non cooperation during the latter's visit to Patna in April 1920. Among the Muslim leaders of the Khilafat and non cooperation movement were Maulana Mazharul Haque, Dr Syed Mahmud, Shah Mod Zubair, Md Shafi Daudi, Syed Hasan Imam and Sirfaraz Hussain.

Bihar and Gujarat were the only two Provincial Congress Committees that accepted non cooperation even before the special session of the Indian National Congress at Calcutta resolved to accept it.

### **Mahatma Gandhi and the Muslims**

Mahatma Gandhi's first visit to Bihar was connected with the Kisan movement in Champaran district which was seething with unrest. In 1906 Bloomfield, an Englishman, was murdered in which the accused number one was Sherik Gulab Ali, an important leader of the Champaran Kisan movement. In 1916 Gandhi attended for the first time the Congress session held at Lucknow. A delegation of Kisan leaders under the leadership of Raj Kumar Shukul and Pir Mohammed Monis also attended the Congress session, and these leaders requested Gandhi to visit Champaran. Pir Mohammed Monis had been a school teacher and dismissed by the government for his activities in the Kisan movement.

The most important and influential of Mahatma Gandhi's associates in Bihar was Mazharul Haque. Maulana Mazharul Haque and Mahatma Gandhi were India's outstanding leaders who loved their religions and worked with complete understanding for the emancipation of their motherland. One of the organizers of Bihar Conference committed to the general advancement of the people of Bihar and its formation as a separate province. Mazharul Haque was a staunch nationalist dedicated to national freedom as well as communal harmony. The advent of Mahatma Gandhi with his programme of non cooperation brought about a parting of ways between the Gandhians and the liberals opposed to non-cooperation movement and the boycott of English education and institutions. Maulana Mazharul Haque, Shafi Daudi, Shah Zubair and Dr Mahmud were prominent among the leaders who supported



freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. The Ulemas also joined the non-cooperation movement on account of national movement as well as the Khilafat cause and Maulana Shah Badruddin of Khanquah Mojibia Phulwarisha if renounced the title of Shamsul Ulema the first such act of renunciation at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. Other prominent figures among the Ulema leaders were Maulana Sajjad Qazi Nurul Hasan, Maulana Umar Ghani, Maulana Wahab Darbhangani, Maulana Mohammed Ali Monghyri. These Ulemas had a hold on the Muslim masses and under their leadership the masses of the Muslim community were also mobilized into the national movement. Thus the activities of the nationalist Muslims and the Ulema leaders combined to produce a high level of political consciousness and involvement among the Muslims in the struggle against the British. This had the touch of a religious crusade against the imperialism of the British power.

The suspension of the non-cooperation movement by Mahatma Gandhi after the violence of Chaurachauri produced confusion among the national leaders and there was a debate between the changers and nonchangers regarding the future course of freedom struggle. The episode had also demoralising effect on both the communities and the Sudhi and Sangathan movement further added to the demoralisation of the Muslims. In the year 1922 there happened an incident that apparently led to the unprecedented communal tensions.

In 1922 the Viceroy invited an important Hindu leader of the non-cooperation movement Swami Shardhanand who was in jail for talks and following these talks which remained confidential the Swami started the work of Sudhi of the Muslims and at the same time Dr Moonje set up Sangathan among the Hindus. As the Sudhi and Sangathan movements started with the Congress leaders there were all kinds of speculations and misunderstanding. During this time Sir Fazle Hasan of Punjab in an address at All India Muslim Educational Conference meeting at Aligarh invited the Muslims to preach Islam among the untouchables.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Syed Taufail Ahmed Monglori, *Aligarh Muslim Ite Roshan Mustaqbil* 1943 p. 379. Translated by the present author.

Although the exemplary cordiality between Hindus and Muslims during the non cooperation movement was followed by wide spread communal tensions in most parts of the country the unity of freedom movement in Bihar was not disrupted. The commitment to communal harmony and even joint electorate continued undiminished until later after the Nehru Report. Shafi Daud broke away from the nationalist politics of the Congress.

The proposal for joint electorate was considered at a special meeting of the Muslim representatives of Bihar and Orissa on 8 May 1927 at Patna in which Sir Ali Imam Shafi Daud and Syed Abdul Aziz supported these proposals. An all parties conference held at Patna under the presidentship of Sir Ali Imam decided to boycott Simon Commission. The All India Muslim Nationalist Conference at its Lucknow session of 1931 under the presidentship of Sir Ali Imam passed a resolution in support of joint electorate. Among the delegates, who attended the Conference from Bihar were Dr Syed Mahmud Prof Abdul Bari Maulvi Ismail Shahid Mohammed Qamar Dr Zainul Abedin Qazi Ahmed Hussain and twenty-five others. In his presidential address Sir Ali Imam observed that, Separate electorate connotes the negation of nationalism. Political problems are but reflex of social forces. If you erect an iron wall between community and community in their politics you destroy the social fabric and day to day life will become insupportable if you insist on building political barriers. Nationalism can never evolve from divisions and dissensions.<sup>10</sup>

### Non-cooperation to Separatism

The damage to the unity of national movement was irreparably done not only by communal tensions and riots but also by the clash of interests in the field of democratic politics. In the year 1924 local elections were held in Bihar and the rivalry between the communities took a form that discouraged and disillusioned Muslims regarding their prospects in electoral politics. In the municipal elections of Patna, there were a number of prominent Congress leaders including Rajendra

<sup>10</sup> K. K. Datta, *Freedom Movement*, op. cit. p. 92.

Prasad Jagat Nara n Lal Anugrah Nara n Sinha Abdul Bar and Khursh d Husain Rajendra Prasad wished that Khurshid Hussain should be elected Chairman and A N Sinha the Vice Chairman of the Municipal Board. However Husain faced great difficulty in his election and his Hindu opponent raised the communal question and moved with a calf from door to door to solicit votes. After all this Husain decided not to contest the election for the Chairman of the Board.<sup>11</sup>

During the same year there were elections for district boards and the scramble for seats also took the form of communal rivalry and illwill. In the poisonous atmosphere then prevailing Muslim candidates faced great difficulty in these local elections. Even Maulana Mazharaul Haque though successful had to face stiff fight. Shafi Daudi however lost and Rajendra Prasad says 'In Muzaffarpur Maulvi Shafi's services and sacrifices were second to none. There was however no unity among Congressmen and Maulvi Shafi was defeated. Its repercussions were to be seen later. Maulvi Shafi decided to organize the Muslims separately. The Muslims of Bihar felt that Muslims were not elected in sufficient numbers. There was lack of confidence'.<sup>12</sup>

The year 1928 marked as it was by the Nehru Report and the visit of Simon Commission, proved to be a prelude to major political developments in the country and in Bihar. The Nehru Report envisaged a constitution based on popular sovereignty, secularism, joint electorate and adult franchise and linguistic reorganisation of provinces. Although the Report was adopted by the All Parties Convention held in Calcutta, the Muslim League was split on this issue. In Bihar Dr Mahmud Prof Bari Shah Zubair Abdul Ghafoor of Darbhanga and Qazi Ahmed Hussain continued to support the Congress. Sir Ali Imam and Hasan Imam also stood up in support of the Report. Shafi Daudi on the other hand emerged as the bitter opponent of the Nehru Report and joint electorate. He formed with the Agha Khan and Sir Fazle of Panjab All India Muslim Conference to demand separate electorate.

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11 Rajendra Prasad *Atmkaatha* p. 295

12, *Ibid* pp 303.

and a federal system with complete autonomy and residuary powers vested in the constituent provinces

The lack of accommodation and confidence between the two communities as evident in the communal tension and electoral disappointments of Muslims in state and local elections during the 1920s had their far reaching repercussions on the political settlement of India. And yet the situation was not out of control though there was not much hope for adjustment of communal claims. Maulvi Shafi Daudi became the champion of reservations of seats separate electorate and provincial autonomy with residuary powers vested with the provinces. In Bihar there were at the time of Round Table Conference two different streams of Muslim separatists and Muslim nationalists.

### **The Government of India Act, 1935**

After the enactment of the Government of India Act 1935 Mahatma Gandhi withdrew from the active leadership of the Congress whose annual session held at Lucknow in April 1936 under the presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru gave up the policy of boycott and decided to fight elections to capture power in the provincial legislatures. The Muslim League at its Bombay session also favoured participation in the legislative elections.

The elections were based on separate electorate and the total number of seats in the Bihar Legislative Assembly was 152. Mr Jinnah in a belligerent anti-British mood, was looking forward to cooperation with the Congress in fighting the elections under the Reforms Act. He was however, keen that the Muslim League should fight elections on its own and wanted that Maulana Sajjad should collaborate with the Muslim League. It is noteworthy that in the neighbouring province of U.P., eminent Congress leaders such as Chaudhry Khaliquz Zaman, Hafiz Ibrahim and Nawab Ismail found it necessary to contest the Assembly elections on the Muslim League ticket while in Bihar the League could not field a single candidate and independent party candidates were virtually considered as Congressmen. The Congress contested 107 seats of which seven were Muslims and five of these won the election. There were forty constituencies for Muslims out of which the Muslim Independent Party won 28 seats Muslim United Party 3 seats

Ahrar Party of Shafi Daudi 3 seats and Lady Imam one seat as an independent candidate. The election results were a telling commentary on the resilience of national temper of the Muslim politics in Bihar even in the face of communal tensions electoral disappointments and the Muslim quest for security of life and property and for adequate share in political representation.

### **The Fatal Decade**

It has been reported earlier how Muslims cooperated with Hindus in getting a separate province of Bihar. The Muslim leaders by and large cooperated with the Indian National Congress. Sir Ali Imam, Hasan Imam, Mazharul Haque, Maulana Sajjad Sarfaraz, Hasan, Dr. Syed Mahmud, Shah Zubair and Shafi Daudi (except in his last phase) were in the vanguard of national secular politics. It is noteworthy that although All India Muslim League was founded in 1906 and its Bihar branch in 1909, the activities of Muslim League were concerned primarily with the protection of certain religious, cultural and educational rights of the community. The Muslim League of that time was hardly distinguishable from the Indian National Congress and it was often seen that the same leader held office at various times in the two organizations. In Bihar far more important than the League was the status and role of the Imarat Sharia in the religious and political life of the Muslims. Under the inspiration of Maulana Shah Badruddin, Shah Mohiuddin and Maulana Sajjad, the Imarat played a pivotal role in the struggle for national freedom as well as in seeking to maintain the identity and unity of the Muslims on the basis of their religious laws and institutions. After the flames of the movement were extinguished, there occurred some confusion and vacuum in Muslim politics in India. But in Bihar, Imarat Sharia and Jamiatul Ulema under the leadership of Shah Mohiuddin and Maulana Sajjad continued to claim an overriding and unifying role that transcended party organizations in directing and leading the Muslim politics. On the eve of the Assembly elections to be held under the Government of India Act, 1935, it formed the Muslim Independent Party and decided to take part in the electoral politics. This was the time of separate electorate and there were three

main Muslim parties Muslim Ahrar Party led by Shafi Daudi Muslim United Party led by Abdul Aziz and Muslim Independent Party led by Mohd Yunus under the inspiration of Maulana Sajjad

In these elections the Congress Party of course got an overwhelming majority in general seats but refused to form the government. Among the minority parties the Muslim Independent Party being the largest its leader Mohd Yunus was invited to form the government which lasted for five months only. The government of Mr Yunus was replaced by the Congress government led by Srikrishna Sinha in which Dr Mahmud was the Education Minister and Prof Bari was elected the Deputy Speaker.

Dr Syed Mahmud Prof Abdul Bari Shah Omar Manzoor Ahsan Ijazi and Abdul Ghafoor of Darbhanga were consistent supporters of the Congress against the Muslim League. They received full and strong support from Imarat Shariat Jamiatul Ulama and the Momin Conference led by Qayum Ansari. The Muslim socialists also extended support to the Congress—and the prominent among them were Ahad Fatimi, Razi Azimabad, Abul Hayat Chand and Anisur Rahman. Mohd. Yunus of Independent party also sympathized with the Congress.

And yet the partition movement of Mr Jinnah engulfed Bihar as well as India. It has already been mentioned that not only communal tensions but also democratic politics worked to create in the Muslim mind a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about their future. The Muslim leadership of Bihar had weathered the storms and stresses of both communal tension and electoral politics and hoped to cooperate with the Congress in the formation of coalition government. Maulana Sajjad and the religious leaders and the Muslim Independent party refused to adopt the Muslim League platform. The Congress however achieved electoral success in 1937 beyond its own expectations and assured of such success resolved to form government only where it had a clear majority of its own. The Muslim League did well only in U.P. but did not get a single seat in Bihar. Even in U.P. the Muslim League was helped by Jamiatul Ulama in the hope that both the League and the Congress would work together. The failure of the Congress to accommodate

the Muslim League in U.P. is a theme argued by Abu Kalam Azad in his book *India Wins Freedom*. The case of Bihar too merits consideration for the additional reason that the Congress had to deal not with Muslim League which was not an Assembly party in Bihar but Muslim groups which were nationalists and committed to cooperation with the Congress.

The separatist movement in Bihar's Muslim politics started after Jinnah's visit to Patna in 1937. Jinnah aroused the fears of Muslims' fears of what would happen when India got freedom and Hindus would be in a majority and therefore in command of political power. The history of this period in Bihar was very much a reflection of the national scenario; the provincial politics was overshadowed and eclipsed by the confrontation between the League and the Congress on all India scene. The irony is that this confrontation had to be in Bihar also where there was virtually no Muslim League up to 1937. The failure of the Congress to keep the Muslim Independent party as its ally must be reckoned an enormous default on its part, a default that allowed the Muslims to drift towards the Muslim League. The feeling of insecurity and the dread of communal violence latent in a minority was whipped up by the demand for partition of the country. In such a situation Jafar Imam, Mr. M. Amin, Mr. Badruddin Nawab, Ismail of Patna, Ashiq Warsi, Hussain Imam and Latifur Rehman of Gaya, Khan Bahadur Jahl of Darbhanga and Mr. Zeyaur Rehman of Purnea appeared as the leaders of Muslim League. Fear and hatred feed upon themselves and many Bihar Muslims were drawn towards the Muslim League demand of partition. The Pied Piper of the Muslim Homeland lured the emotionally charged Muslims to lands where they have remained rootless migrants. It needs to be noted however that in the Bihar Assembly elections of 1946 although 34 of 40 Muslim seats were bagged by the Muslim League and only six seats were won by the nationalist Muslims, about 40 per cent of Muslim votes were in favour of the nationalist Muslims.

## *The Struggle for Survival*

The independence of India was accompanied by the partition of the country and since the Muslims had asked for partition they were blamed for it. Much has been written on the causes of partition and the game of apportioning responsibility goes on. One thing however seems obvious—the Muslims were concerned over their future as a community and their concern grew as the prospect of freedom drew nearer for freedom would bring democracy based on the principle of majority rule. The fear of Hindu majority was carefully planted and nurtured by the British in their attempt to divide and rule and the British must bear the main responsibility for the tragic division of India. The Muslims as well as the Hindus made the mistake of considering each other a monolithic and cohesive community while in fact both the religious communities were further divided into a number of ethnic communities. And the Muslims did not realize that in a democracy the factors of region, language and class would be as important as religion, and the basic divisions would be political rather than religious.

In retrospect it also seems most probable that the Muslims even though self-conscious and crying for separate identity and even existence, were concerned more for their identity as a community than as a separate nation. The two-nation theory ignored the distinction between the Muslims as a community and Muslims as a nation. There can be several communities in a nation which is essentially a political territorial entity. It was only in 1940 that the demand for a separate state put the



stress on nationality. The post partition history of the Indian subcontinent has however shown that the Muslims far from being a nation were hardly even a community and language and culture are not always subsumed by religion. The partition of Pakistan within twenty five years of its birth was the most eloquent commentary on the false notion of separate Muslim nationhood.

Even then the previous chapter has amply shown that the Muslims of Bihar lived and died as authentic sons of the soil committed to the land of their birth and full participants in the struggle for freedom and giving hardly any support to the Muslim League until 1946 even though partition was being discussed among all parties since 1940. And when partition took place all the contending parties gave their consent to it. All the leaders were aging and tired and Mountbatten rushed with it.

The partition was followed by an exodus of people across the border—Hindus and Sikhs coming to India and Muslims going to Pakistan. Many Muslims specially from central Bihar migrated to East and West Pakistan those who remained in their homeland were faced with a traumatic experience bewildered and demoralized. The Muslims perceived that the Hindus consciously or unconsciously held that after the foundation of Pakistan the Muslims had no moral right to live in India. The Muslims were not only depicted by their neighbours as responsible for the partition of the country but suffered from a sense of guilt. The wounds of communal violence inflicted in 1946 were deep and created a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about their future in the land of their birth.

Amidst these adverse circumstances the most important and urgent task was to wash away the stains of the recent past and promote the rehabilitation of the Muslims in their own homeland. Dr Mahmud and Mr Abdul Qayum Ansari aided by Shah Omair and Ahad Noor helped to boost up the shattered morale of the Muslims. Mr Qayum Ansari had a consistently nationalist record and through the Momin Conference and the Relief portfolio that he held in the Bihar Cabinet he served the interests of the backward groups of Muslims.

The more difficult task of reestablishing the link between the erstwhile Muslim League and the Congress was achieved by Dr. Mahmud who invited these leaders to join the Congress. Among these leaders Jafar Imam, Mazhar Imam, Mohd. Shafi and Maqbool Ahmad were the prominent ones.

The Socialists were opposed to partition and were bitter critics of the Muslim League and its leaders. However, the Muslim socialists such as Ahmad Fatmi, Abul Hayat Chand and Razi Azimabadi who were among the architects of socialist movement in Bihar threw themselves into social service and helped to restore confidence and security among the dejected Muslims. They worked through the help and intervention of the socialist leader Jayprakash Narayan to stop the raid and search of Muslim houses and thus helped to remove fear from the Muslim mind.

The Communist party of India had supported the League demand for partition but later on the communists vied with others in criticising partition. After independence the CPI adopted the Randive line of revolutionary struggle against the new government, which could not have any effect on the people in general and the already distracted and scared Muslim masses. Comrade Ali Ashraf, Syed Habib Ali Amjad and Habibur Rehman were active communist leaders who organized poorer sections of the masses, workers and students and especially industrial workers and Birni workers among whom the majority were Muslims.

The erstwhile three organizations namely Imarat Sharia, Jamiatul Ulema and the Momin Conference further helped to promote a spirit of confidence and to prevent the demoralization of Muslims.

Slowly the Muslims brought themselves back into the main stream of national politics. The Congress system emerged as the dominant feature of the free India's party system and was a coalition of various caste factions perhaps more prominently in Bihar than anywhere else in India. Caste is characterised by primordial loyalty of kinship and often displays the qualities of tribal solidarity with its traditional rights and obligations. As an extension of the caste, politics too acquires the quality of tribalism or personal consideration based on family and

kinship. But the quality of Marrawat extends to friends and neighbours even when they do not have blood relationship. Thus the Muslims came to be affiliated as friends and allies to the various caste factions and their leaders and the Muslim leaders came to be identified with this or that faction leader in the Congress and other political parties. With the accentuation of caste factionalism the Muslim leaders virtually ceased to be minority representatives and became valuable allies of the leaders of the various caste factions. Thus the culture of kinship was extended to embrace friendship and the Muslims recovered a meaningful role for themselves in the caste ridden popular politics of Indian democracy.

The identification with the Congress gave to the Muslims a feeling of being in the right political stream as the Congress party retained the quality of a national movement. The Congress was also the ruling party and had political reward to offer to its supporters and followers. The Muslim inclination towards the Congress accordingly had good pragmatic reasons. A few Muslim leaders emphasized the independent role of the Muslim leadership. Moulvi Usman Ghani and Moulvi Syed Ayub were the conspicuous social leaders who subscribed to this view. Moulana Usman Ghani, an old nationalist Alim, maintained that the Muslims as a community were not permanently wedded to any one political party and should participate in the democratic politics of the country as free citizens. Moulvi Syed Ayub was more of a social worker primarily interested in the cause of Muslim education and the advancement of Urdu. He maintained his links with various political parties and individual leaders, and worked with great zeal and dedication for the Bihar Riyasati Anjuman Taraqui Urdu and made it an active and popular institution and organized a band of dedicated workers for this purpose.

The Muslims by and large gave their support to the Congress more than any other political party, but the impression that the Congress monopolized the Muslim vote was dispelled in the general election of 1967 when the Muslims also in keeping with the general trend of public opinion, were disposed against the Congress. By 1967 the erstwhile Muslim leadership, with pre-independence moorings, was dead or defunct, and a new set of leaders such as Ghulam Sarwar, Betab Siddiqui,

A Moghan Shah Mushtaque Ahmed Moin Ansari and Taqui Rahim emerged as the new leaders around the Urdu cause. Of these leaders who were independent and unattached to any party Taqui Rahim alone was a party leader of the left wing based on an alliance among CPI, CPM and SSP. The left alliance decided to advocate Urdu as the second language in the state and Mahamaya Prasad of Jan Kranti Dal was supported by the left alliance. Together all these parties formed a coalition government (SVD) after the first Congress defeat in 1967. The new Muslim leaders were new and inexperienced and no stalwarts and their emergence shows that Muslim politics reflected the general trend of the state politics in which anti-congress wave was at an ascendancy at that time. Thus the political perceptions and voting preferences of the Muslims reflect the trend and pattern of general voting behaviour. The Muslims in India ceased to be not only a separate constituency but also a special constituency. The Muslim electorate felt and behaved as part of the national electorate.

The question has however been raised about Muslim solidarity and Muslim isolation in view of the evidence that 'In the 1950s Muslims were returned to the Assembly from all regions of Bihar but by 1972 they were returned for the most part only from areas of Muslim voting strength'. There is nothing startling in this as the electoral process is not entirely independent of the social demographic and ethnic factors and the logic of democracy dictates that number should play its part in the choice of representation. The logic of democracy is however lost in the dispersal of Muslim population into areas where they are too small to be a significant factor. The phenomenon of correlation between Muslim representation and large Muslim population could be considered an index of insufficient political integration and Muslim isolation. But this can be dismissed as doubtful because (a) Muslim representatives are also elected from constituencies with small Muslim population and (b) the trend of more representatives from North Bihar districts reflects more the normal influence of number in electoral choice.

It is also pertinent to point out that there are other measures of political integration and participation. Much has been made of the culture of 'Marawat' and Muslim voters and representatives tend to be aligned with parties and factions and their leaders on the basis of inter personal relations. It is only realistic to recognise that political integration takes place not only in the politics of representation but also in the field of patronage. The conspicuous improvement in the status of Muslims for example is an example of change brought about by the policies of the government in regard to facilities in education services and business. Other Muslims have also shared in the general progress that the country has achieved since independence however spotty and uneven that progress may be. The status of Urdu and the employment opportunities of Urdu schools provide another example. There is evidence that Muslims have also found reasonable employment in public sectors such as nationalised banks and Insurance Corporation. In view of all these the current talk of 'isolation' is not true any more than the earlier talk of Muslim separatism was.

### **The Nature and Scope of Minority Politics**

#### **LOK SABHA**

#### **Muslims MPs from Bihar since First General Election**

<i>Party</i>	<i>1952</i>	<i>1957</i>	<i>1962</i>	<i>1967</i>	<i>1971</i>	<i>1977</i>	<i>1980</i>
Congress	3	2	2	2	3	—	5
Janta Congress	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
Janta Party	—	—	—	—	—	2	—
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>

The total number of parliamentary constituencies is 54. Before 1977 this was 53. The table shows that the Muslim representation in the Lok Sabha has been generally half or one third of their due on the basis of their population. It is also apparent that the number of Muslim representatives rises with the rise in the fortunes of the Congress in 1952, 1957, 1971 and 1980.

The proportion of Muslim representation in the state Assembly has been almost half of their share of the total

population. In 1972, 1977 and 1980 general elections there were respectively 25, 25 and 28 Muslim members of the Legislative Assembly consisting of 318 members.

### Bihar Assembly

Party	1972	1977	1980
Congress I	14	8	21
Congress O	4	—	—
CPI	3	—	1
CPM	—	—	1
SP	2	—	—
PSP	1	—	—
Janta Party	—	14	—
Lok Dal	—	—	2
Janta J P	—	—	1
Independents	—	3	2
	24 (8%)	25 (8%)	28 (9%)

The table shows the attachment of the Muslims to the Congress and their revolt against it in the elections of 1977, on account of the emergency. The voting behaviour of the Muslims in 1977 elections was generally in accord with the voting trend in North India. The two Muslim M.L.A.s belonging to the Lok Dal in 1980 shows the increasing impact of the backward castes among Muslims as well as Hindus in the electoral process of Bihar. It is also clear that the Muslims choose from among the existing secular parties and do not aspire or strive for political parties of their own. They however reject Jan Sangh and it was only their concern for democratic as well as minority rights that overcame their usual distrust of the Jan Sangh and led to their support of Janta Party in large numbers. The electoral results through the vicissitudes of fortune indicates the deep commitment of the Muslims to liberal as well as secular democracy. This of course does not preclude their concern for their group identity and for their religious, cultural and educational rights. Indeed much of the Muslim politics beyond the electoral and party politics is wrapped up into the politics of language and education. Muslim trusts and personal law, the removal of discrimination and

assurance of job opportunities and finally security of life and property and protection against communal violence

It is however a serious limitation and drawback of Muslim politics in particular and of Bihar in general that it lacks the content and substance of social and civic purpose. Obsessed with self interest and such community matters as are essentially communal there is a tendency to ignore the secular matters of common interest whether in the field of economic development or social reforms. Not many Muslims come forward to spouse or associate with constructive programmes of land reforms rural development educational advancement and municipal or Panchayat improvement. Bihar is generally deficient in the voluntary organisations and constructive social and civic activities. The Muslims in this respect share the civic apathy of their neighbours and their areas of settlement are worse than the usually bad environment of town and villages. Phulwarisharif a town of overwhelming Muslim majority and the seat of Khanquah and the headquarters of Imarat Shariat famous for its religious instruction and guidance is a virtual cesspool and stinks as no other place does. The general Muslim indifference to environmental pollution and their civic apathy are incredible. There is an ignorance of mundane matters necessary for social and civic improvement and consequently the Muslim inhabited areas are the worst spectacle of decadence and blight although not always poor. It is not that the sense of public spirit is entirely lacking there are voluntary organizations that collect charity money for mosques tombs, graveyards madrasas and orphanages. All these doubtless need some help and assistance. But there are fewer instances of organized efforts to improve the educational and economic conditions of life. There are some schools and colleges but their standards and resources do not match those of other similar institutions. The weakest spot is in their inability to encourage individual enterprise and support collective efforts for the mobilization and development of economic resources to raise health education and well being of the weaker sections of the community or the society at large. The religious leaders may as well direct the Muslim mind towards the making of their settlements more livable and beautiful

the political situation in Bihar is noteworthy. In 1973, the Chief Minister of Bihar was Abdul Ghafoor, a protégé of L. N. Mishra, a Central Minister from Bihar. It is reported that Mishra wanted to remove Abdul Ghafoor from the Chief Ministership. The CPI was in those days pro Congress and its relations with Mishra were cordial and it seems the CPI was willing to pull Mishra's chestnuts out of the Bihar fire. In 1974 the CPI gave a call for Bihar Bundh and the people responded to this call enthusiastically.

The agitation soon passed into the hands of students who were dissatisfied on account of rising mess bill and abuses of university administration. The students held meetings to formulate their demands at Muzaffarpur and Patna but there emerged two student bodies—Chatra Yuva Sangarsh Samiti and Chatra Yuva Sangarsh Morcha. The Morcha consisted of All India Students Federation affiliated to CPI Students Federation of India affiliated to Marxist Coordination Committee and Bihar Students Association affiliated to CPI ML while the Samiti included Vidyarthi Parishad, Socialist Youth Wing, Congress O Youth Wing and Tarun Shakti Sena. The Morcha gheroaded the Education Minister on March 16 and there was police firing in Bettiah on the same day. The Samiti gave another call for agitation on March 18 and there was arson, loot and police firing in Patna. The agitation passed into the hands of the Samiti and the students approached Jaya Prakash Narayan to lead the movement. In spite of the ideological differences the immediate target of all the opposition parties and also of the dissident Congress appeared to be the Muslim Chief Minister Abdul Ghafoor.

The Bihar unit of the Communist Party of India, which had been consistently supporting the Congress Government in the State called upon all left and democratic parties to unite for replacing the Congress ministry by a left and democratic government. The party executive at its meeting held on 22-23 May 1974, stated that it was on the basis of unity among various left and democratic forces forged in the struggle for defence of democracy, against hoarders, profiteers and landlords and the anti-people policies of the government of Bihar that the democratic process in the state would gather sufficient



strength for bringing into being a clean progressive and democratic government in place of the present government.

The fate of the Muslims in Bangladesh moved the Muslims in Bihar against the Congress government at the same time the attack on a Muslim Chief Minister of Bihar initially kept the Muslims by and large out of this anti Congress agitation. Those Muslims who were opposed to the Congress and active in opposition were actively associated with the J P movement. Included in this category were the socialist leaders Z A Jafri, Independents like Ghulam Sarwar and Ali Huda Warsi, Marxists like Taqui Rahim and Sarvodaya leaders such as Ahmad Fatmi, Syed Jabir and Razi Azimabadi and some student leaders.

The Jama Masjid incident involving the imprisonment of its Imam did not endear the Congress to the Muslims. The declaration of Emergency followed by the sterilization programme and the firing of Turkman Gate, Delhi broadened the cleavage between the Congress and the Muslim community. In a meeting addressed by Jaya Prakash Narayan in Anjuman Islamiya Hall in 1974 two of the respectable nationalist Muslim leaders—Jafar Imam and Shah Omir—were present. And the 1977 elections proved that the Muslims were once again in tune with the general trend of the public opinion and thus in the mainstream of national politics. Like their compatriots the Muslims were also soon disillusioned with the Janata Government and when the Janata Party disintegrated they voted back the Congress to power in Bihar as well as India in 1980. There is however a general disenchantment with politics and political parties and as the data below show there is a desire among some to have a party of their own. All the same the commitment to the value of a liberal constitutional democracy remains high and unflinching.

### **Political Values and Perceptions of the Muslim Elite**

We now present below a report of the findings of the survey of the Muslim elite conducted in 1975-76.

#### **Democracy**

On the question whether majority rule or independent

judiciary is the guarantee of democracy 174 (60%) believe in majority rule and 117 (40%) in independent judiciary as the guarantee of democracy. This was a subtle distinction but the interviews were taken during the emergency when constitutional questions such as these were highlighted in the context of 42 amendment.

Whether the government knows best as to what is in the interest of the people, the opinion is rather sharply divided with 153 (52.6%) for and 138 (47.4%) against the proposition.

Is political opposition a nuisance? While 76 (24.5%) think so, 219 persons (75.5%) disagree. This was again significant in view of the emergency prevalent then.

As regards the proposition that the best decisions are made at the top, 181 (63.3%) agree, while 105 (36.7%) do not.

Similarly regarding another proposition that a country needs fast economic development rather than a long debate on what is constitutionally proper or not, 237 (82.3%) are in agreement while 50 (17.4%) are not.

On all these items the responses may indicate a superficial inconsistency. In fact, however, there is a very significant pattern in these responses: there is belief in the principle of majority rule and in the value of opposition, but also a belief in better decision making at the top and a concern for economic development. These two dimensions viz political democracy and economic rationality (development) are shown equal concern. On the one hand it is true that commitment to grass roots democracy and participation in decision making appears rather weak.

### Participation

On the question whether political participation is desirable for a minority group, 259 or 88 per cent think that it is so. And 160 (54.6%) as against 133 (45.4%) do not agree with the statement that participation makes no difference to the policies because they are made at top.

On the question whether the Muslim's active participation in politics leads to the displeasure of the majority community, although a majority of the elite 172 (58.8%) do not think so.

a substantial minority (17/41.5%) believes that it does. Not a satisfactory feeling for political integration of the communities.

Does political participation make for unnecessary factions? 174 or (59.4%) do not think so. 119 (40.8%) think so.

Are elections important? 267 or 93.4% agree that elections are important. Thus there is consensus on the importance of elections and the reasons for their importance are because they contribute to democracy, enable the people to elect their representatives and express their opinion, and because voting is their constitutional right.

### Parties

What about inner party democracy? As regards the proposition that political parties don't allow freedom to their members to take part in the decision making process, 187 (64.3%) agree, against 104 (35.7%). Even then there is a consensus that there can be no democracy without political parties. 279 (94.6%) agree, against 16 (5.4%) agree with this view. And there is little apprehension that in case the opposition parties unite they would destroy democracy.

Does the choice of political party make any difference? 275 (60.7%) against 118 (40.0%) disagree with the statement that it would make little difference to the country whether one party or the other comes to power.

There is thus a consensus on the merits of an open party system. And yet there are strong reservations on the relationship subsisting between political parties and minority groups.

Must a minority belong to a political party of its own in order to protect its own interest? To this question 128 (43.5%) agree, against 166 (56.5%) gave an affirmative response. This is somewhat shattering for secular political development. Although not a majority opinion, this is sizeable enough to be a matter of concern. This feeling for separate or communal political party is obviously related to the fact that political parties were not perceived as protector of minority interests. A very large number 213 (72.4%) as against 81 (27.6%) believe that there is hardly any political party to protect the interest of the minorities. The ambivalence about the political parties and the

general disenchantment with all of them is reflected in a majority (61%) holding that it is hard to say whether Muslim interests are served better by the ruling party or the opposition. The ambivalence or the scepticism regarding the political parties are based in a majority of cases on instrumental grounds. For in response to a question whether Muslim identity is lost by joining a political party other than their own 192 (60.3%) against 107 (34.7%) do not think so. The question of separate identity is important for a minority but general concern is for protection of community's interests.

### Government

In response to the question thinking about the governments how much effect do you think its activities the laws and so on have on your day to day life ?

Great effect	Some effect	No effect
136 (46.7%)	130 (44.7%)	25 (8.6%)

On the whole the activities of the government are perceived to improve conditions in this country by an overwhelming majority of 276 or 93% of the elite respondents.

Has the government succeeded in giving shelter to the minorities ? The opinion is divided between 153 (52%) for and 140 (48%) against the government.

Are government officials responsive to the needs and aspirations of the Muslims ? Only 52 (17.7%) believe that they are very much or a good deal responsive while 111 (38%) believe they are responsive only to some extent and 131 (44.6%) believe they are not responsive at all.

The image of the public sector is not at all flattering. Has the government ownership of industries succeeded in providing necessary incentive to efficiency ? 185 (63.4%) give a negative answer against the affirmative answer of 107 (36.6%).

### Constitution

Commitment to democracy is unquestionably there but there is a concern for the inviolability of the Constitution. There is overwhelming consensus 227 (77.5%) in favour of the opinion that frequent amendments would harm the nation.

There is also an overwhelming majority opinion (708 or 71%) in favour of the opinion that more powers in the hands of Parliament is dangerous for democracy. The intensity of these opinions varies but the dissenting opinions are definitely around a quarter of the total respondents.

Even during the emergency only 135 (47.7%) approved of the proposals for forty second amendments.

### **Living Condition Problem from Outside**

On the question whether the general living condition of people has improved during the last ten years 261 (88.8%) of the elite agree that it has improved. However on the question whether the living condition of the Muslims has improved only 175 (59.5%) believe that such improvement has taken place.

289 out of 291 valid responses suggest that there are certain problems faced primarily by the Muslims. In addition to the common problems such as unemployment, poverty and illiteracy Muslims face special problems connected with Urdu discrimination and insecurity of life, liberty and property. 255 (89.5%) of the elite agree that there is discrimination in employment opportunities against the Muslims. In response to a question whether the respondent himself ever faced discrimination 102 (38.5%) answer in the affirmative and 232 (85%) maintain that they know someone who had been subjected to discrimination.

### **Intra Community, Internal Problems**

On a question whether there are disagreements and conflicts among the Muslims 278 (98%) of the elite admit that there are conflicts within the community on the basis of caste and other group conflicts, problems arising from educational and economic backwardness and from clash of factional and personal interests. Personal, sectarian and caste factors account for most of the conflicts in the community. Educational and economic factors are perceived as problems by fewer people and given lower weightage.

### Help

*Who do you approach for help ? The answer is as follows*

<i>Friends and Relations</i>	<i>Political Leaders</i>	<i>Officials</i>	<i>Community leaders</i>
97 (35 7%)	74 (28 7%)	37 (14%)	11 (4 3%)

### Accountability and Articulation

On the question as to whose interests political leaders consult most the following responses are revealing

<i>Personal</i>	<i>Party</i>	<i>Caste</i>	<i>Constituency</i>	<i>Community</i>
211 (76 4%)	36 (13%)	11 (4%)	9 (3 3%)	4 (1 4%)

On the question whether Muslim problems are effectively articulated 210 (72 4%) maintain they are not

How far are the Muslim representatives able to influence government policies on behalf of the Muslims ? 193 or 60 per cent believe they are little able to do so

Are the Muslim representatives organized and influential enough to get things done for the Muslims ? 263 or 91 per cent say they are not

### Beneficiaries in the Community

There is a widespread belief among the elite that Muslims have benefitted although only to some extent from economic development of the country. However on the question as to who have benefitted most the perception is that backward castes (Mominis in particular) and the working classes have benefitted most

### The Muslim Culture

Do the elite fear that the Muslim culture is in danger ? 64 per cent think it is not

### The Future

Muslim elite are more optimistic about the future of the country than about their community

216 (77%) believe that the future of the country will be better while a lower figure of 161 (57 7%) believe that the future of the community will be better

## *Social Forces and Formation of the Elite*

Bihar is an overwhelmingly agricultural and rural State with only ten per cent of urbanisation against twenty per cent of national average. Ninety per cent of its people live in villages many of which are still difficult to reach quickly or easily. With inadequate and undeveloped road and transport facilities many of the villages continue to be remote from centres of commerce, industry and administration. With twenty per cent literacy against the national percentage of thirty Bihar's population is lower in per capita income Rs. 700/- as compared to the All India per capita income of Rs. 1 000/- in 1976. According to a report Bihar contributes 41 per cent of the total mineral production of the country yet its share in industrial production is just 8.5 per cent. Per capita development expenditure is as follows:

India	Bihar	Tamil Nadu	Maharashtra	Punjab	Gujarat
22.52	12.40	29.57	28.01	26.29	26

A comparison of Bihar's share in the total food grains production average (1975-76) with that of some other States indicates the higher potential of Bihar's development. Bihar's share is 7.9%, Andhra Pradesh 7.1%, West Bengal 7%, Tamil Nadu 6%. Bihar's fertilizer consumption per hectare of cropped area (1978-79) was 17.2 kg against 46.3 kg of Andhra Pradesh, 30.6 kg of West Bengal and 68.1 kg of Tamil Nadu. Likewise Bihar's electricity consumption per capita (1978-79) KWT is 69, Andhra Pradesh's is 112, West Bengal's 147 and

Tamil Nadus 219 In an overwhelmingly agricultural and rural economy the low consumption of fertilizer and electricity explains the backwardness and also shows the promise of Bihar's economy if the supply of such inputs as fertilizer and electricity is increased

<i>State</i>	<i>Share in total foodgrains production</i>	<i>Fertilizer consumption per hectare</i>	<i>Electricity consumption per capita unit</i>
Bihar	7.9	17.2	69
A.P.	7.1	46.3	112
W.B.	7.0	30.6	147
T.N.	6.0	68.1	219
All India	100	29.8	154

*Source* Statistical Outline of India—1980 Tata Services Ltd. Department of Economics and Statistics

Bihar is quite rich in minerals and therefore the potential for industrial development is also high but the State has been unable to exploit its resources. The Statesman (May 18 19 1981 Delhi) in its editorial commented 'Economically the indications are bleak despite the fact that Bihar is India's richest state in mineral wealth. Containing 87 per cent of total cooking coal deposits 88 per cent of mica and 25 per cent of iron ore resources it had ample potential for rapid industrial advance. But the record has been dismal. Roughly three quarters of the population is estimated to be living below the poverty line per capita income is 36.8 below the national average and from 1960-61 to 1975-76 the state's domestic product grew at a meagre 1.7 per cent per annum.

An aspect of Bihar's backwardness is its large population and high birth rate.

The total population—5 63,369 (1971 Census)



The health and family planning programme in poor condition as evident from the following data

	<i>Population per hospital bed</i>	<i>No of couples effectively protected by F.P. methods</i>
Bihar	2510	13.0
A.P.	1477	26.9
W.B.	958	41.3
T.N.	975	28.7
All India	1231	22.8

*Source* The same as of the earlier table

On both these items Bihar's performance is nearly half of the all India average

Thus neither rich cultural traditions nor abundant economic resources have helped Bihar to achieve a decent economic life for the bulk of its people. A glaring fact is the economic dominance of a few castes notably of the Bhumihars and the Rajputs in land ownership and of the Kayasthas and the Brahmins in services. Rajputs and Bhumihars about ten per cent of the population are the landowning gentry and account for 78.6% of the landowners. Kayasthas and Brahmins along with these two landowning castes have the share of 56 per cent of all the government jobs.

The population of Bihar is divided into all the religious communities and into a very large number of caste groups. The Hindu population 78 per cent has one important characteristic—it is divided into three sets of caste groups—High castes (13%) backward castes (50%) and the Harijans (14%). The high castes include four castes—Brahmins (4.7%) Rajput (4.2%) Bhumihar (2.9%) and Kayastha (1.2%). These account for 13% of the total population and 56% of all jobs in public authorities and institutions. Among the backward castes Yadavas account for 11 per cent of the total population and along with another 7 per cent of the Kurmis and Koeris have been in the vanguard of the backward movement. According

to the Census of 1971 the Muslim population of the various districts is as follows

### Districtive Percentage of Muslim Population

*Bihar 13 48 (1971 Census)*

Patna	7 31	Saharsa	12 17
Gaya	10 07	Senthal Parganas	14 62
Shahabad	7 46	Purnea	39 66
Saran	13 18	Palamu	10 18
Champaran	18 18	Hazaribagh	13 11
Muzaffarpur	13 67	Ranchi	7 27
Darbhanga	14 70	Dhanbad	11 52
Monghyr	9 10	Singhbhum	3 95
Bhagalpur	13 30		

Total 13 48

*Source* Census of India (Bihar) 1971 Series 4 Part II—C(i) p

It is in such a social and economic environment that Muslims also have to share the fruits of backwardness as well as progress of the State. The above data are enough to indicate the backwardness of the general population and the Muslims are of course not immune from the effects of a depressed economy and an inegalitarian society. Rapid economic development and social progress therefore remain the urgent task of this State for the good of Muslims as well as Hindus, Christians, Harijans or Adibasis.

Within this framework interesting and substantial change has been taking place in the social circumstances of the Muslims of Bihar. There have been occurring migration of the educated from the village to towns, their shift from agriculture to services and professions, and diversification of occupations. All these have resulted in the life chances of those who manage to get ahead as well as those who are already on top. The whole society being characterized by enormous inequality, a few of all communities are quite well off, whereas the majority of all the communities are wretched. A minority however is inclined to believe that it is specially or singularly deprived. There are caste tensions and violence among the Hindus, but the Muslims feel they are marked as victims of prejudice and hostility. Thus the fate of the minority community is tied with the general development and equitable distribution of the fruits of development. There is still a phenomenon worthy of note

the all-round progress of the Muslims since independence. This is especially significant as it preceded the current rise of the backward castes among the Hindus. The rise of the Muslims from a backward and depressed to a progressive and prosperous people is a bright chapter in the history of Muslim in free India.

Bihar thus presents a classic example of a society of gross imbalances. Endowed with abundant natural resources its economic condition has remained arrested under the weight of exploitation by the British and the Indian Zamindars. Educationally it was dominated by the Bengalis and Bihar became a separate province without acquiring or developing an identity of its own except in administration. On the other hand it is rich in cultural traditions rustic but based on the roots of its own—witness Madhubani painting and rural handicrafts—the Maithil Pundit, the Bhojpuri peasant or the Muslim weaver. In the political field caste and community have been the critical factors—probably more than elsewhere in India—and the emergence of the new caste forces has meant mounting tension but this is also an index of a political process characterized by vitality and not stagnation.

Such a political system as of Bihar tends to be highly competitive ridden with primordial cleavages reinforced by organizational conflicts and personal rivalries. Caste factions therefore are the main stuff of Bihar's politics. It is easy to bemoan it and there is no doubt that public interest often suffers before the rival caste jealousies and claims. The worst effect of damage to public interest is on the administration of the state. All the administrative organizations are beset with the penetration of caste influence and the weaker sections suffer most if there is no one in the bureaucracy or politics to defend their rights. The state as a whole suffers because programmes of common interest such as public transport, electricity, irrigation, supplies of necessary materials and education are all affected by the particularistic interests. Private interests are allowed to supersede public interests. Groups jostle together with interests of their own—there is tacit understanding and legitimacy that these groups pursue their own

interests by hook or crook. There is accommodation in appointments of commissions (including Public Service Commission) and universities on the basis of caste and community. What is loyalty for the in group is corruption for the out groups. Kinship and friendship are the twin pillars of private and public life in Bihar.

The regional and caste class disparities are equally reflected in the social stratification of the Muslim community. Traditionally the Muslims of Central Bihar comprising Patna, Arrah, Gaya and Monghyr though only seven per cent of the total have been the most advanced in education, services and professions. Since independence the trend has been towards greater mobility and development of Muslims from the North Bihar while there has been more frustration and emigration among South Bihar Muslims who were subjected to greater communal violence at the time of partition and independence.

After independence the democratic process also contributed to the importance of numbers, and districts of North Bihar with larger percentage of Muslim population naturally acquired political leverage, and districts such as Purnea for example were in a position to capture seats in the legislative bodies and also in the ministry. Thus the political importance of large electorate paved the way for a shift in the political leadership and power of Muslims from the South to the North Bihar. This was made possible particularly because of high concentration of Muslim voters in some constituencies of Kishanganj, Darbhanga, Madhubani and Siwan where the political parties also continually set up Muslim candidates and the Hindu leaders of these areas have to reckon with the Muslim interests in such constituencies. Besides politics improvement in education and employment in services or professions have also contributed to the rise of Muslims in northern districts.

There has also been a greater shift in the structure of leadership and power among the Muslims due to the social awakening, political organization, economic consolidation and educational advancement of the backward castes. Detailed studies of the social change among the backward castes have yet to be made but the case of Momin movement deserves mention. The

Momins have followed the traditional occupation of weaving and they were the main manufacturers and suppliers of hand woven cloth. After the advent of the British the handicrafts including weaving were faced with ruin by the import of British goods and textiles and the Momins suffered the adverse consequences of British imperialism. Hence they were against the British. Mahatma Gandhi's emphasis on weaving and spinning made him popular with the Momins who due to their interests gave full support to the nationalist movement. The loss of economic and social position made the Momins the victims of imperialism and a depressed caste dominated and exploited by the upper caste elite. Thus the impoverishment and degradation of backward castes provided a favourable background for a reform movement which also harmonised with the constructive social programme of Mahatma Gandhi. The Momins had no reason to sympathize with the feudal elements in the leadership of the Muslim League and were instead attracted towards the social and political objectives of Mahatma Gandhi and Indian National Congress. During the Khilafat movement the educated Momins were inspired to do something for the uplift of their community.

However until 1937 the objective of the Momin movement was mainly social aiming at the educational and economic advancement which was necessarily directed against the Muslim upper castes who practised discrimination and social distinctions against the backward castes. After 1937 the Momins joined the Indian National Congress, rejected the two nation theory of the Muslim League and worked for the uplift of their people as well as for the freedom of the country.

That the backward castes in general and the Momins in particular were subjected to both economic and social degradation which made them pariahs of the community. Their plight can be imagined from the fact that the upper caste elite made fun of them and seldom participated in their functions and seldom partook of the meals at the residence of Momins. It is reported that a few educated members of the Momin community for the first time assembled in Patna in 1916 but obviously nothing came out of the first assembly until 1925 when Bhabani Prasad Das decided to launch his journal from

Calcutta The first all India Conference held in 1925 at Calcutta was presided over by Professor Shamsuddin Shams of Patna Among the Momin leaders of Bihar Maulana Asim Bihari Abdul Qayyum Ansari Khan Bahadur Jalil Latifur Rehman a landlord and Hafiz Manzoor and Shafiqullah Ansari were very prominent and Abdul Qayyum Ansari was the most important political figure who more than any other Muslim leaders whether Momin or otherwise had political strength of his own and was a minister of the cabinet rank in Bihar for long years

Since Independence a middle class specially of the bourgeois variety has sprung mostly from the Momins This is an important phenomenon waiting for a detailed study of its own

### **Social Formation of the Elite**

We now present the data on the social formation of the elite who are the subject of this survey

#### **Birth and Residence**

With the exception of two districts Giridih and Palamu in South Bihar the Muslim elite selected for this study were born in varying numbers in the remaining twenty nine districts of Bihar (except ten who were born outside Bihar) And yet it is noteworthy that most of them were born in a few districts such as Patna Nalanda Gaya Bhojpur and Rohtas (all comprising the erstwhile division of Patna) Bhagalpur and Monghyr Darbhanga Purnea Saran, Siwan and Muzaffarpur and Ranchi

#### **Birth Place**

<i>District</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)
Patna	105	35.4
Monghyr	26	8.8
Darbhanga	25	8.4
Gaya	22	7.4
Purnea	13	4.4
Nalanda	12	4.0
Saran	8	2.7

(1)	(2)	(3)
Bhojpur	8	2.7
Bhagalpur	7	2.7
Muzaffarpur	6	2.0
Rohtas	5	1.7
Siwan	5	1.7
Ranchi	5	1.7
Madhubani	5	1.7
Champaran E	4	1.3
Champaran W	3	1.0
Total	259	84.6

### Place of Residence

TABLE II

<i>District</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Patna	196	66.0
Darbhanga	18	6.1
Monghyr	11	3.7
Muzaffarpur	10	3.4
Purnea	9	3.0
Bhagalpur	8	2.7
Gaya	7	2.4
Champaran E	5	1.7
Total	264	88.0

While over one third of the elite were born in Patna this city has become the place of residence for two thirds of the elite. There is greater concentration of the elite in a few district towns for purposes of residence. Thus two thirds of the elite born in many parts of the State are now concentrated in the capital city of Patna.

### Rural Urban Background

In so far as the birth place is concerned 167 persons (56.2%) were born in urban areas 130 persons (43.8%) were

born in rural areas. The figures of residence indicate that 271 persons (91.2%) have their residence in urban areas whereas only 26 persons (8.8%) continue to live in rural areas.

TABLE III

	<i>Urban</i>	<i>Rural</i>
Birth place	167 (56.2%)	130 (43.8%)
Residence	271 (91.2%)	26 (8.8%)

Table III read with table II clearly shows a very high degree of urbanization among the Muslim elite as well as preponderance of the elite in the capital city of Patna. It is significant that 91 per cent of the Muslim elite live in urban areas and almost two thirds of them live in Patna alone. Such massive urbanization of the elite highlights enormous geographical and occupational mobility among the elite.

#### **Martial Status and Number of Sons and Daughters**

TABLE IV

<i>Unmarried</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>Widower</i>	<i>Widow</i>
31 (10.4%)	240 (80.8%)	23 (7.7%)	3 (1.0%)

Of these 240 married persons only four (1.4%) have two wives. So much for polygamy among the Muslim elite.

TABLE V

<i>No of respondents</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>No of sons</i>
47	15.8	1
70	23.6	2
57	19.2	3
32	10.8	4
23	7.7	5
6	2.0	6
4	1.3	7
1	3	8

Mean = 2.266



**Number of Daughters**

TABLE VI

<i>No of Respondents</i>	<i>No of daughters</i>
53	1
65	2
41	3
31	4
15	5
8	6
2	7
2	8
2	9

Mean=1 1976

**Education**

TABLE VII

<i>Level</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Traditional Education	32	10.8
Primary	7	2.4
Middle	2	0.7
High School	26	0.8
Inter	20	6.8
Graduate	45	15.2
Post graduate	45	15.2
Professional degree	89	30.1
Ph D	30	10.1

The Muslim elite are highly literate with 70 per cent of them being graduates or post graduates or professional degree-holders

## Occupation

TABLE VIII

<i>The Elite Respondents</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Percent</i>		<i>Their fathers</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Nothing	9	3		10	3.4
Politics	30	10.1	+	3	1.3
Civil Service	36	12.1	—	57	19.2
Academic	44	14.8	—	11	3.7
Medicine	32	10.8	+	13	4.4
Engineering	13	4.4	+	Nil	
Law	17	5.7	—	19	6.4
Journalism	7	2.4	+	Nil	
Agriculture	15	15.1	—	80	26.9
Social Worker	2	7		1	0.3
Religious Work	13	4.4		19	6.4
Business	48	16.2		49	16.5
Students	5	1.7		—	—
Retired	24	8.1		9	3.0

The figures regarding the occupations of elite members and of their fathers are revealing in the changes that have taken place in the occupational pattern of two generations of Muslims. Agriculture, civil service, law, and business appear to be the main occupations of elite fathers, and with the exception of business, the elite sons are not well represented in agriculture, civil service, or law. There is, however, an impressive rise in politics and professions such as academic, medicine, engineering, journalism, and a steady position in business. The greatest decline is in agriculture and civil service. It appears that the Muslim elite have gained a position for themselves in professions and business as well as politics. All the previous data taken together demonstrate high urbanization and professionalization of the Muslim elite. Elite fathers were mostly in civil service, business, and agriculture (57%). If the category of retired fathers is added, the percentage is increased to 60. Hardly 15 per cent account for professions, and there is no engineer or journalist among the elite fathers. The elite sons, however, account for 38% of professions. Business, however, seems to be carried on

by as many elite sons as their fathers presumably as a hereditary occupation

### Caste

TABLE IX

	<i>No</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Syed	114	38.4
Sheikh	69	23.2
Mallick	9	3.0
Pathan	11	3.7
Momin	22	7.4
Rayeen	3	1.0
Others	15	5.1
Not mentioned	54	18.2
Total	297	100.0

More than two thirds of the elite belong to the conventionally designated upper castes among Muslims. Syeds and Sheikhs alone account for 61.6 per cent of the elite members and together with Malik and Pathan they account for 68.3 per cent of the total elite. Among the backward castes prominent are the Momins and the Rayeens. The Momins in particular have achieved considerable improvement in their social and economic status since independence. The rise of the Momins has already been discussed earlier in this chapter.

### Sect

An overwhelming majority (92%) of the elite are Sunni. There are 18 Shia (6.4%), two Qadiani (7%), one Bohara (4%) and about 14 or 5% unidentified in respect of sect.

**Age**

TABLE X

19 24	10
25 34	35
35-44	87
55 64	56
65 74	41
75 above	68
Total	297

**Organizational Affiliation**

71 members of the elite or 23 9% do not belong to any voluntary organization. However 61 members belong to one 53 to two 40 to three 25 to four 16 to five 13 to six to seven and 6 to eight organizations

TABLE XI

None	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
71	61	53	40	25	16	13	4	6
23 9%	20 5%	17 8%	13%	8 4%	5 4%	3 4%	4 4%	1 3 % 2 0 %

Of those who belong to organisations 61 persons belong to political organizations 87 to cultural organisations 55 to religious organisations 68 to professional organisations 60 to welfare organisations and 12 to trade unions On the whole therefore three fourths of the elite are affiliated with one or more voluntary organisations which are mostly political or professional cultural religious or welfare organisations

**Mass Media**

286 members out of 297 (96 3%) claim to read newspapers daily

TABLE XII  
English Newspapers

		<i>National</i>
Times of India	98	36.4%
Statesman	65	24.3%
Indian Express	17	6.4%
Hindustan Times	10	3.7%
		<i>State</i>
Indian Nation	195	72.8%
Searchlight	98	37.0%

Since about 15 per cent of the elite read more than one national English daily (the first four of the above mentioned dailies) the number of English newspapers read exceeds the number of readers.

TABLE XIII  
Urdu Newspapers

Sangam	102	38.9%
Sadat Aam	94	35.9%
Sathi	17	6.6%
Dawat	7	2.7%

There are 136 persons (45.8%) who read one of the Urdu newspapers. It is strange that Aljamat is not mentioned although one would expect this paper to be read by the ulemas and social workers.

267 (90%) of the elite claim to read magazines also 84 persons (35%) read literary magazines 36 (25%) read political magazines 28 (11.8%) read religious magazines 17 (7%) read films and sports magazines only 29 (12%) read professional magazines. It would appear that most of these people read light magazines as a pastime in leisure. The low percentage of members who read professional journals is a sad commentary on the reading habits and professional sophistication of the professional elite.

Although 224 or 75.4% of the elite claims to listen to the Urdu programme of AIR it is interesting to note that only 25 of these or 11.2% regularly listen to the Urdu programme.

### Books or Authors of Influence

221 (74.4%) persons maintain that they were influenced by some book or author in their life—Of these Quran has been the source of influence for 86 persons (37.7%) Maulana Azad comes next then Mohd Iqbal then Mahatma Gandhi followed by Jawaharlal Nehru and Ghalib

TABLE XIII

1	Quran	86	37.7%
2	Iqbal	24	10.0%
3	Azad	28	12.0%
4	Gandhi	10	4.4%
5	Nehru	8	3.6%
6	Ghalib	8	3.6%
Total		164	71.3%

### Economic Condition

149 (50%) of the elite own houses other than their ancestral house i.e. they have got houses constructed by themselves

159 (53.5%) do not own any farmland. The remaining 138 persons own land in the following brackets

Area	1-9	10-9	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and above
Number	57	42	16	12	5	6

It is clear that although there is high migration of the elite to urban areas 46.5% of them continue to own some agricultural land presumably as absentee landlords. It is likely that although the elite have their own residence in urban areas either for settlement or employment other members of their families brothers and sisters or their children continue to live in the village homes. This is borne out by the statement on subsidiary sources of income.

As regards subsidiary sources of income 212 of the elite (74.4%) say that they have not much income, and 39 (13.6%) claim to have agriculture as the source of their subsidiary income.

## *Culture and Social Change*

The overwhelmingly rural character of Bihar's demography the semi-feudal relations in society and economy the caste solidarity and inter-caste tensions the abysmal poverty of nearly half the population—all these reveal a common culture of rural poverty and primary group solidarity of its people. There are also strong regional feelings based on language and the ethnic affiliations of tribals and non-tribals. The culture of Bihar does not have a common focal point as may be the case with some other states of greater linguistic or ethnic homogeneity. Bihar's culture is highly pluralistic and competitive on the basis of group identity.

The culture of Muslims is partly anchored in the tenets and articles of their faith in the laws and institutions of their Ummat and partly in the mores and customs of the larger social environment in which they live. Five time prayers and the call of the Muezzin from the minars of mosques the fasting during Ramzan and the festivals of Eid—all are based on religious injunctions. Certain festivals such as Muharram Shab-e-Barat and Bara-wafat though associated with the religious history, are celebrated in forms that are specific to Indian and Bihar situation. The huge Muharram processions fireworks at Shab-e-Barat Urs at Khanqwas and the Majlis or Majlis have a local flavour of their own. Pilgrimage to Mecca is an attractive prospect for those who can afford it.

Religious institutions and even the formal language impart a distinctive identity to the Muslims. The circumcision

(Khatna) the naming ceremony (with the slaughter of two goats for the boy and one for the girls) the Makatab or initiation into learning of the Holy Quran with a Miladun Nabi the Iftai Dawat or community dinner to break the fast in Ramzan all these lend a special character to the cultural life of the Muslims. The religious education and the Urdu language serve to maintain this consciousness of a Muslim identity. The large number of madrasas Khanquas and the Urdu language are the chief factors in this identity. The institution of purdah though getting weaker is still observed. Except in major cities Muslim women in purdah avoid going out for shopping. And even in cities most Muslim women while shopping are seen in burquah (veil). Some change is visible but it is confined to a very small number.

Social change is however taking place in several areas of Muslim life. The rigid caste structure of earlier times is breaking down specially due to the uplift of the backward castes. The inter caste marriage never prohibited by Islam was nevertheless a taboo and even now not common. The improvement in the status of the backward Muslims however tends to destroy even social distinctions and even though marriage is based on caste and biradari the social intercourse is much more open and free than it was in the past. The successful upward mobility of Muslims bears repetition and the example is catching on.

Likewise there is improvement in the life of those areas which were considered typically backward. Purnea for example, is no longer isolated and backward. The progress of better farmers and their induction into politics and of their younger generation into education and services have brought a major change in the dispersal of regional progress.

On the other hand the decay of certain upper castes or families exclusively dependent on zamindari and without the skill or ability to adapt to new circumstances has brought them down to a serious decline of status. But this decline is due to the causes of social change and not to any deliberate political discrimination. Indeed this is part of the continuous rise and fall of social forces in any society. The community as a



whole however shares in the problems as well as prosperity of the society as a whole.

## Religion

A Khanquah is an Islamic centre of meditation and guidance and plays an important role in shaping the mind and behaviour of its disciples and followers. There are numbers of Khanquas in most districts of the State and the traditional population is centred around the Khanquas. These have been famous centres of Muslim religious, cultural and social life and learning. The Khanquas of Manersharif, Phulwari Sharif and Monghyr wield great social influence over their followers and their very venerable priests have enjoyed pervasive influence on the members of the Muslim community. The Khanquah at Manersharif is the oldest and traces its origins to the early period of Islam's advent into India. The Khanquah Mujeebia, Phulwari Sharif, about 14 km. west of Patna, is in a densely populated Muslim area. The Khanquah was founded by Hazrat Jafar Arfin Makhdoom Shah Mohd. Mujibullah Quadri in 1125 Hijri (1705 A.D.). He was succeeded by his son Shah Nematullah Quadri who had seven distinguished sons. The eldest son, Hazrat Makhdoom Shah Abul Hasan Fard, was a great religious divine and also wrote poetry in Persian. After his death 1215 Hijri (1785 A.D.) his elder son succeeded him but died soon; his younger son, Hazrat Ali Habib Nasar, was known as Madabhir Alim and he was also a famous poet in Persian. One of their descendants, Hazrat Maulana Badruddin, was selected for the award of the title of Shamsul Ulema in 1915; he returned the award to the British government in 1919 in protest against the British policy towards Khilafat. His name is counted among the foremost freedom fighters of Bihar. In addition to his religious and spiritual status and role, he exercised great influence on the Muslim masses by his act of renouncing a British title. Later on when Iqbal's Khilafat Committee was founded in 1921, he was made its first Amir. His son and successor at the Phulwarisharif Khanquah became the second Amir.

### **Imarat Shariah**

The Imarat Shariah Bihar and Orissa aims at the organization and regulation of Muslim personal and social life according to Islamic way of life and is an institution of great significance. Its foundation was laid on the principle that the Muslim social life should be organised under the guidance and direction of a Muslim Chief or Amir.

Another aim of Imarat Shariah was to fight for national freedom in cooperation with the Congress and it successfully protected itself and the community from the virus of communal separatism.

The Imarat also organizes relief and security measures for the protection, defence and aid of the Muslims.

The Imarat has also sought to raise the morale of the Muslim in all times of distress.

### **The Mosque and the Madrasa**

The Mosque is primarily a place of worship for the Muslims. It is also a hub of cultural activities especially connected with religious education. In Islam there is great emphasis on the need to spread education and around a mosque there is generally a moulvi to impart religious instruction to children. Such religious education is aided by Khanquas and madrassas. Madrasa education is an important aspect of Muslim education of Bihar. At present there are 1300 recognised Madrasas where about one lakh students are enrolled. The government of the State bears most of the expenses of these madrasas.

While we are dealing with the Madrasa movement it is worth mentioning here that Madrasa Shamsul Huda Patna originally established by Syed Noorul Hoda in 1912 was the first madrasa which was taken over by the government. Gradually as the number of madrasas increased the government of Bihar created a post of superintendent of Islamic Studies in 1922 to supervise the working of madrasa and a Madrasa Examination Board was established. After 1940 both these institutions were combined under the Superintendent of Islamic Studies. In 1950 the designation of Superintendent of Islamic

Studies was changed and it came to be known as Director of Islamic Education having the same powers and functions. The recent establishment of an independent and autonomous Madrasa Education Board in March 1979 is very important in the history of Madrasa movement. The administration of all the affiliated madrasas comes under its power. The registration of new madrasa, the conduct of madrasa examinations, distribution of degrees and the formulation of madrasa syllabi are some of the functions of the Board.

In order to equalize the depth of madrasa education with that of school education the syllabus of madrasa is made up to date so as to match that of schools. All the branches of social sciences and language and literature as well as theology have been included in the new syllabus and the degrees of students passing with the new syllabus are recognized as equivalent to those of secular schools and colleges.

Wastania	=	Middle
Foqunia	=	Matric
Molvi	=	I A
Alim	=	B A
Fazil	=	M A

The madrasa graduates are eligible for admission to teachers training schools and some seats are reserved for them.

Pay scale of the molvis has been equalized with that of school teachers.

An important feature of the madrasa education is that students are given free lodging and boarding, and the poor and the low middle class Muslim are the main beneficiaries of this system of education. They however form a traditional stratum of the Muslim community. There are about ten thousand teachers and 1 lakh of students in about 1300 madrasas.

### **Sunni Waqf Board**

The Sunni Waqf Board was established in 1968 under the Bihar Waqf Act 1947. It consists of members nominated by the State government. Its chairman is also nominated by the government.

The Waqf Board yields crores of rupees as income which

is mismanaged and with better management this income can be used for the welfare and uplift of the Muslims

The voluntary social work done by Karimia Waqf Estate by Mr Shafique of Jamshedpur is exemplary. Karim City College, Girls's College, Training College, the instruction of Urdu testify to his dedication to social work.

## Language

Bihar is a multilingual state. People in its eastern parts are linguistically close to Bengali and even the Maithili language has great affinity with Bengali. On the other hand people living in Western parts speak Bhojpuri and share it with the people of eastern U.P. In the districts of Patna, Nalanda and Gaya it is the Magahi that is largely spoken. The Muslims as well as the Hindus speak the language of the region. The official language of the state administration is Hindi. The Muslims have taken to Hindi since independence but continue to use Urdu as their cultural language. There is provision for the teaching of Urdu in schools and colleges and the Madrasas are of course entirely Urdu medium institutions. There has even been an increasing tendency of the Government to accord to Urdu the status of a second language in selected areas where the Muslim population is sizeable.

The language of learning and administration in Bihar before the East India Company was Persian and later Persian was replaced by English. The court language however was Urdu in Kaithi script in spite of the use of English as the official language. The Yunus Ministry in 1937 sanctioned the use of Urdu script in courts. The Congress Ministry that succeeded Yunus government in keeping with Mahatma Gandhi's ideals and with the efforts of Dr Zakir Husain, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Dr Abdul Haque reached an accord on the language of Hindustani to be written in both the Urdu and Devanagari scripts.

The fanatic supporters of both the languages however frustrated the implementation of this agreement. After independence and partition English was replaced as the official language of Bihar. This resulted in great frustration and a sense of cultural

deprivation Urdu has emerged as the vital concern of Muslims in Bihar. And there was a continuous and sustained struggle to have Urdu recognised as a second language. After a prolonged struggle Urdu has been given the status of second language. Urdu in Bihar is given a better treatment than it receives in U.P. The facilities for education and instruction in Urdu are provided.

### **Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu**

Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu Bihar came into being in 1925 through the efforts of Zubair Ahmad and Qazi Abdul Wadood. In 1938 this Anjuman was affiliated with All India Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. After the partition of 1947 Muslims were disorganized and depressed and a need was felt to rejuvenate the Muslim society and culture but the Anjuman was not able to fulfil this need. In 1951 Urdu Conference was organized. Bihar Rayasti Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu was created under the inspiration and initiative of Saeed Md. Ayub and it actively worked for the promotion of the Urdu cause. The main personalities behind the creation of the organization were Jafar Imam, Akhtar Urenwi, Lady Imam, Qayyum Ansari, Ghulam Sarwar and Betab Siddique.

During the Chief Ministership of Abdul Ghaffoor and the mounting agitation, there arose differences between two groups of the Anjuman. The group which enjoyed the political support of the government formed a separate Anjuman and was affiliated to the Central Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu. The original Anjuman was managed by people who belonged mainly to the opposition. The irony of the situation is that leaders of Urdu cause are divided and it appears necessary that at least on such issues as Urdu the Muslim leadership should show greater cohesion and responsibility. However the Anjuman has been ridden with factionalism and there are now two parallel organizations.

In 1975 when the election for presidentship of Bihar Rayasti Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu was to be held there was disorder in the meeting because of clash between two factions. During this period its name was changed and it came to be known as Anjuman Taraqqi-e Urdu Bihar and this was later

recognized by the Bihar Government and the All India Anjuman Taraqqi e Urdu

### **Urdu Academy**

The establishment of Urdu Academy in 1972 is the result of initiative taken by the then governor. This was established to make all efforts for the development of Urdu and to encourage the people to learn and speak Urdu. The governor of the State is the Chairman of the Board and Prof. Kalimuddin Ahmed its Vice chairman. Its members include 4 nominated by the Education Ministry, 2 nominated by the Governor and the Heads of Urdu department in all the universities.

The Academy was established to give financial assistance to various Urdu libraries and organizations to promote publication of literary works, to give grants to indigent Urdu poets, authors and journalists and to give awards for good literary works.

The original grant was 2 lakhs. The present annual grant from the government is Rs. 12 lakhs. Unfortunately the academics and the bureaucrats lacked the vision and dedication to undertake appropriate means for the cause of Urdu or for any outstanding work.

### **Cultural Values of the Muslim Elite    The Survey Data** *Religion*

Regarding the question whether the influence of religion is increasing or decreasing, the perception is equally divided as is evident from the following table.

TABLE

<i>Increasing</i>	<i>Holding steady</i>	<i>Decreasing</i>	<i>Decreasing much</i>
95(32.8%)	50(17.2%)	105(36.2%)	40(13.8%)

However, on their attitude towards this phenomenon, more than 90% are concerned one way or another and only 9.6 per cent are neutral.

TABLE

<i>Approve</i>	<i>Disapprove</i>	<i>Neutral</i>
139 (47.8%)	121 (41.6%)	28 (9.6%)

### Personal Law

On the question whether there is need for change in the Personal Law of Muslims 56 persons (19 2%) say there is while 235 (80 8%) maintain there is no need for any change in Muslim personal law

On the further question whether laws governing marriage divorce etc should be made or changed only when the Muslim ask for it or the Parliament may do so on its own only 88 reponses were recorded and 209 gave no response But of the 88 74 (84%) say that changes in personal law should be undertaken only when the Muslims ask for them

### Women

On the question whether women should be allowed to work outside their home 178 (60%) agree that they should be allowed to do so

However 188 (63 7%) maintain that co education is not good for girls but 99 (34%) disagree with the statement

In the matter of property rights only 122 (41 6%) support equal share in property

94 (32 4%) believe that polygamy is natural for man while 181 (62 4%) do not believe so

165 persons (56 5%) against 122 (40 8%) say it is better to let a girl marry of her own choice than to pay a dowry to get a good bridegroom

Apparently while the majority of the elite are conservative on co education they are liberal on female employment and even on freedom of choice in marriage The majority of the elite are also conformists on the right to equal share in property but progressive in their view of polygamy

### Social Change

On the question whether Muslims should be prepared to discard certain things if the Muslim community has to progress 233 (80 9%) as against 46 (16%) are agreeable to the proposition The things they believe should be discarded are superstitions (9%) casteism (15%) extravagance (36%) orthodoxy (18%) irreligious Westernization (18%) Purdah (9%) Thus only one real object of change mentioned by at least one third of the respondents is extravagance

271 (91%) perceive the Hindus having made greater progress than the Muslims. However 211 or 71% concede that the Muslims have also made significant change during the past years. On the kind of change the following perceptions—are given

Political improvement	45 (21%)
Social uplift	33 (15%)
Economic development	33 (15%)
Educational advancement	74 (34.6%)

Thus progress in political and education fields is perceived by more people than in socio economic field

### Family Planning

On the question as to who should decide the number of children a couple should have we get the following response

<i>Couple</i>	<i>Husband only</i>	<i>God</i>	<i>Nature</i>
212 (75%)	10 (3.4%)	51 (17.5%)	2 (7%)

Thus while 18 per cent do not favour human intervention 72% do want the couple to make this decision and only 3.4% persons would like the husband alone to decide it

But no matter who decide 153 (52.4) believe family planning to be against nature 138 (47.8) 139 (48.3) maintain that birth control is undesirable as children are gifts of God

On some indices the Muslim elite remain traditional. They are not prepared to accept the need for change in personal laws or to change their attitude towards family structure. For them the laws and institutions governing marriage, divorce and inheritance are all synonymous with immutable articles of faith. The proposition that the basic values of Islam—faith in one God, His Providence, man's accountability for his actions and virtue in conduct are eternal while the laws and institutions have developed historically through interpretations and may be reviewed in response to new and changing circumstances is still beyond their consideration. And the lack of creative religious thought and reform is reinforced by social and economic inertia to smother meaningful change and progress.



## *Conclusion*

The central theme of this study is the status and role of a religious minority in a plural society. This is more specifically the study of the Muslim Elite their social formation culture and politics in Bihar. There are several findings that are of great significance for an understanding of the relationship between religious identity and national integration. The question of ethnicity or subnationalism has been a major issue in the national integration and political development of many states in all the worlds—the First the Second and the Third. In India this question has been a momentous issue and is tied with the unfortunate partition of India. There have been several studies of the regional and communal subnationalism in India and about communal politics of the Muslim in Bengal and U P. The Muslim separatism has been traced to the threatened minority in U P or the depressed majority in Bengal. Squeezed between these two giant provinces of undivided India, Bihar's unique history of its Muslim minority was ignored. A full length study of the status and role of the Muslims in Bihar is still awaiting the attention of historians. However attention has been drawn in this work to the distinguished record of full and equal participation of the Muslims in the public life and the national movement in Bihar. This is a record of a religious minority committed to secular and national politics communal harmony and national freedom. The Muslim Elite of Bihar played an active and influential role in the formation of Bihar in the Freedom and the Khilafat movements.

and after independence in the nation building activities

The partition of India on religious grounds has made us unnecessarily guilty about religion unnecessarily because the partition was not a religious but a secular phenomenon a result of communal nationalism as there can be separatism on account of language and ethnicity also. There is also no ground to believe that religion as such makes for communalism. Mahatma Gandhi, Rajgopalchari and Radhakrishnan, Maulana Azad, Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani and Zakir Hussain were profoundly religious persons but not communal. The communists proclaim their secularism from the rooftops, but they supported the Muslim League demand for partition. It is certainly an easy and false solution to the problem of communal separatism to denounce and repudiate religion.

The Muslim Elite of Bihar have been quite active in the national and secular affairs of the land of their birth. They were equal participants in every major event of national importance. They provided top leadership in Western education, formation of Bihar Khilafat and non-cooperation movements and the fight for national freedom. The community produced eminent Muslims in many walks of life who became pioneers of education, law, judiciary and social reform and political movements. Since independence the Muslims of Bihar have sought and achieved rehabilitation as free citizens of India. Their political behaviour has been generally in tune with the trends of general public behaviour. In all these various phases of modern history the Muslims while participating fully in the national mainstream have been conscious of themselves as a community and concerned with the preservation of their religious and cultural identity. There have been sometimes tensions between their dual loyalties, but there have been similar tensions facing other castes and communities. The important point is that eminent Muslims have shown equal attachment to the land of their birth as well as to their religion.

To say this is certainly not to support religious fundamentalism as a moral, cultural or political ideology. Fundamentalism

reflects the absolutism of one doctrine and rejects the truth of other doctrines fundamentalism extends the moral quality to the cultural and political spheres by making one single idea or principle as the only right or relevant basis for life society and polity Fundamentalism as such insists on puritanism and exclusiveness it therefore breeds intolerance and denies legitimacy and validity to alternative principles of life Fundamentalism is the negation of pluralism diversity and dissent There is undoubtedly a need for unity or integration in the life of an individual society and polity But this unity must be based on the common commitment to coexistence within the framework of a democratic society of equal opportunities and a liberal constitution of equal dignity for all irrespective of race and religion language and culture In this sphere Mohandas Gandhi showed the right way

In a pluralist society all segments deserve and are entitled to understanding and respect It is strange how we swear by pluralism and yet frown at the mere mention of a religious group especially the Muslim By sheer number the Muslims are a force for good or evil It must be put on record however that Muslims are judged by stereotypes that are false and misleading There are Muslims and Muslims as there are Hindus and Hindus they are all different in different places and cultures and there are different types of individuals in each society and culture Stereotypes are however persistent and durable and serve as a standard of judgement It is important therefore that we should have a look at the reality—also with understanding to enhance understanding

It is therefore with a view to hold a mirror to the mind and life of the Muslim community in Bihar that this study has been prepared A community has its diversities but to look at its elite is to look into its face and the face is the index of mind Hence this brief and selective presentation of the Muslim elite of Bihar its social formation culture and politics

This elite is by no means uniform homogenous or cohesive it is indeed divided into castes, occupations and convictions The members of the elite do not interact as such—they are known to each other as members of smaller strata of political

leaders, civil servants and professionals. They are elite only as successful and influential members of the Muslim faith. Most of them mention Koran as the most influential book in their life—whether by conviction or by convention it is hard to say. What is the picture of the elite that emerges from this study? They are above all individuals who have made good—they attained a high level of position in their career, trade or profession. These individuals are highly educated, at any rate in a formal sense, and their education is mostly of the secular rather than religious variety. They are not all very rich, but reasonably well off.

The elite has been undergoing a social change in the structural sense. The earlier generation of the elite or the contemporary elite's ancestors were largely associated with agriculture, civil service, legal profession and business. The contemporary elite come more from professions and politics as well as business than from agriculture and civil service and in the professions there is a sharp decline in law but rise in medicine, academic and engineering. There is also great shift from the rural to urban residence of the elite. Most of these elite live in towns, especially in Patna, although some sort of association with ancestral homes in villages is still maintained for the sake of land and relatives. Another noteworthy change is noticeable in the successful efforts of the backward caste Muslims to reorganize themselves and improve their educational and economic status. The social change among the Muslims, for instance, is very impressive and they carved out their strong place in politics also by unitedly and consistently participating in the nationalist struggle for freedom from colonial rule and also against the partition of the country on the communal grounds.

There is less evidence of cultural change on such a scale. There is still commitment to religious beliefs and practices and widespread concern for non-interference with the personal law regarding marriage and divorce and inheritance. Eighty per cent of the elite believe that there is no need for change in the personal law of the Muslims. There is also a feeling for Urdu language and even for the minority character of Aligarh Muslim University. There is however greater appreciation of the value

of education and of employment for girls and less commitment to rigid purdah. This is the most significant breakthrough and probably the key to more cultural change in the community. There is awareness that the Muslims have to discard superstitious beliefs and extravagance indeed the negative attitude to extravagance is another quite significant cultural norm and like female education another key to further cultural change.

The political values of the elite are basically liberal constitutional and democratic. They stand for the democratic principles such as the majority rule, the independence of judiciary and the minority rights. They do not favour constitutional amendments subversive of these principles and attach great importance to the independence of judiciary as a safeguard of fundamental rights and procedures. The elite do not have high regard for the political leadership in general and the Muslim leadership in particular and believe that most political leaders work for self interest—and then for their faction or party and seldom for their constituency or their community. Indeed most elite declare that in the hour of need they seek the help of their relatives rather than that of political leaders. Indeed the public representatives are neither organized nor responsible enough to discharge their obligation to their constituency or community. However people do go to seek the personal favour from the elite—to a doctor, teacher, engineer, civil servant as well as the politician to solve their individual problems. Personal favours rather than organized efforts or official channels are the usual mode for the redress of grievances or solution of problems.

The most disturbing finding from the standpoint of secular democracy is the opinion of 43.5 per cent of the elite that a minority must have a party of its own in order to protect its interests. This felt need for a separate communal party of course reflects the widespread feeling that none of the political parties is a true friend of the Muslims. There are understandable grounds, however mistaken they may be, for such a notion at the grassroots of our political process especially manifest in State politics. In Bihar particularly due to the blatant caste consciousness and discriminatory practices

acknowledged to be part of their own experience by the majority of our elite there is general scepticism about the nature of political parties and their role as custodian or spokesman of public interest. We should also remember that the time of interview was the period of emergency when the Muslims like other sections of the society were concerned over certain newly emerging aspects of the Indian polity and the party system: there was general uneasiness with the Emergency on the one hand, and on the other grave misgivings about the combined opposition of which the Jan Sangh was emerging as the backbone. However making allowance for all these factors it is nevertheless a matter of concern that a separate political party should be considered necessary for the protection of minority rights.

It is a challenge to the secular political parties to inspire confidence and generate conditions for affiliation and loyalty to them on the part of the minorities. The danger appears to be more nominal however if we remember that the separatist Muslim League has had no luck in Bihar and there is hardly any active counterpart to the Majlis e Mushawrat of Uttar Pradesh. There is another sense in which this danger is mitigated. When the elite agree that there is need for a separate party of the Muslims it would be not only charitable but even realistic to interpret their opinion as a desire to see a Muslim lobby to serve as a pressure group for the common interests of the community. It is obviously unintelligent to suppose that a separate communal party could ever attain power and given this dim possibility for communal parties the only hope could be pinned on a separate pressure group to work and fight for the community interests. The moral of this is that political parties must vigorously pursue secular programmes of public welfare or yield to such sectional and communal lobbies and factions and the Muslim Elite and intellectuals must recognise the futility of separate communal parties for themselves as well as its potential danger for the nation.

## *Appendix*

### **Biographies of Eminent Muslims**

Included here are brief biographies of the eminent muslims who have made significant contribution or shown some new path towards the reform or rejuvenation of the Muslim community and the national progress. The biographies are selective and just enough to tell the story of Muslims of Bihar through the many phases of their crises and progress during the last century. There have been of course many other outstanding figures and our list prepared for the purpose of the survey contains many contemporaries who are not included here. These biographies are of those individuals who in the judgement of the author reveal the progress of the Muslim community from the Sadiqupur brothers to the contemporary public men of eminence. There is a need for a complete and comprehensive inventory of all the prominent muslims but this is not the objective of this chapter and the omission of any other deserving individual is not deliberate or motivated.

#### **Khuda Bakhsh (1842-1908)**

Khuda Bakhsh son of Mohammad Bakhsh was born at Chapra Saran on Aug 2 1842.

His father was a distinguished pleader and a bibliophile. Khuda Bakhsh studied first in Bihar and later moved over to Calcutta (where he lived with Nawab Amir Ali Khan father of Mr. Ahsanuddin one of the three Bihar Muslims first to go to England for higher education) and passed Entrance Examination from Calcutta University. He served as a Peshkar to District Judge and a sub-inspector of Schools. In 1868 he passed his pleadership examination and started practice in Patna. He was the first vice-chairman of Patna Municipality and of Patna District Board. He was appointed Chief Justice

of Hyderabad High Court in 1895 and held the post till 1898. He died on Aug. 3, 1908. He was awarded the title of Khan Bahadur in 1881.

Khuda Bakhsh is famous as the founder of the Oriental Public Library in Patna. It has one of the largest collection of manuscripts and printed books on Islamic culture and was declared an institution of national importance by the Act of Parliament in 1969. He propagated modern education among Muslims.

### **Syed Noorul Huda (1855-1939)**

Syed Nurul Huda was born in January 1855. He was the eldest son of Syed Shamsul Huda, an eminent zamindar of Patna City who was also distinguished for having taken a leading part in the propagation of English education in this part of the country.

Syed Nurul Huda received his early education at home on traditional lines in Arabic and Persian. He then joined the only Government High English School then existing in Patna and after passing his Entrance Examination went to Calcutta for University studies. However, he was called back to Patna, before completing his studies. He proceeded to England for higher education in 1876. He graduated from Cambridge University obtaining the degrees of B.A. and LL.B. He was called to the Bar in 1880 and returned to India the same year. He practised for some time at Calcutta High Court but soon joined the judicial service. He retired in 1910 after serving as District and Sessions Judge in several districts of Bengal. He earned a high reputation not only for his integrity and judicial probity but also for his public interest and especially for his interest in the advancement of education. He was awarded the title of C.I.E. by the Government after his retirement.

Syed Nurul Huda was a deeply religious man keenly interested in Arabic and Islamic studies. He had always felt the need of developing and reorganising the Arabic and Islamic education on modern lines so as to produce a body of enlightened Ulema who would give proper guidance to the Muslims.



## APPENDIX

While still in service he had already made a plan for establishing such an educational centre in Patna with his own efforts and out of his own resources and had already taken some steps in this connection. In fact he had taken nearly retirement at his own request to the Government mainly with the object of dedicating the rest of his life and all his resources to the educational and religious work. His great achievement was the foundation of the Shamsul Huda Madrasa and he made a Waqf of properties having an annual income of about 15 000 through a registered deed executed in 1912. After running the Madrasa privately for eight years he submitted before the Government of Bihar his scheme for the development of Arabic and Islamic Education after consulting Sir Fakhruddin the then Minister of Education. The Government of Bihar approved the scheme and took over the charge of the Madrasa along with all its properties and appertinances in 1920 and decided to organise a new system of Arabic and Islamic Madrasas with the Government aid. The Madrasa Examination Board was constituted by the Government with Syed Nurul Huda as its President and Professor Dr. Azimuddin Ahmed as its Secretary.

Syed Nurul Huda also donated a sum of Rs. 50 000/- and large plots of land in Patna for the establishment of a college for the Unani System of Medicine on modern lines. Accordingly the government Tibbia School was founded which has since developed into Government Tibbia College Patna. He died in June 1939.

### **Justice Syed Sharfuddin (1856-1921)**

Syed Sharfuddin son of Syed Farzand Ali of Neora, Patna was born on 19/1856. His sister was married to Nawab Imdad Imam the father of Sir Ali Imam and Hasan Imam. Having been called to the Bar from Middle Temple in 1880 Syed Sharfuddin first started practice at Chapra and later at Patna. He was a member of the Governor's Legislative Council in 1902 from Landholder's constituency.

On 2-1-1907 he took his seat as an Additional Judge of the Calcutta High Court. He was the first Bihari to be appointed a High Court Judge initially as an Additional Judge of the

Calcutta High Court in 1907 and the next year as a permanent Judge of same High Court which he remained till the creation of the Patna High Court in March 1916. From 13 1916 to 19 1919 he was the seniormost judge of the Patna High Court. He became president of All India Muslim Education Conference in 1906. In September 1919 he retired from the Patna High Court and in December 1919 he was appointed a member of the Executive Council of the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa. But after one year he resigned on account of illness and died in February 1921. He took prominent part in separation of Bihar and in propagating the necessity of modern education in Bihar.

### **Sir Ali Imam (1869-1932)**

Sir Ali Imam was born in Patna district in 1869 the elder son of Shamsul Ulma Nawab Syed Imdad Imam. He matriculated in 1887 and joined Patna College but after studying only for a few months he left for England in June 1887 and was called to the bar in June 1890. On his return Ali Imam enrolled in November 1890 as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court and began his practice at the Patna Bar. He soon made himself an outstanding personality in his profession.

Ali Imam's public career began when he presided over the first session of Bihar Provincial Conference held at Patna early in 1908. Towards the end of the same year he presided over a famous session of the Muslim League held in Amritsar. His presidential address at that time attracted considerable attention. The Quarterly Review—the most famous periodical paid following handsome compliments. He had the courage to show the way to his community and to urge it to abandon the narrow sectarian view of their responsibility in India. He was appointed a member of Governor General's Executive Council in 1910. He played very important role as a member of Governor General's Executive Council in the separation of Bihar from Bengal. He became Minister in Hyderabad State. He did not participate in non cooperation movement like other moderates. Later he prominently associated himself as a signatory to the scheme of Indian Reforms.

propounded in Nehru Report in 1928 and was rightly regarded as one of the great nationalist leaders. His presidential address at the Nationalist Muslim Conference held in Lucknow in 1951 marked an epoch in the growth and development of Muslim nationalism in the country which in due course became a factor to be reckoned with in Indian political affairs. In his presidential address he said: 'Much is said by Muslim communalists about the share of the Indian Muslims. I don't believe share can be fixed by state. His share will be in proportion to the contribution he makes towards the obtaining and maintaining of Indian freedom.' In a letter dated 13.7.1930 to Dr M. A. Ansari Syed Ali Imam wrote: 'To me it is perfectly clear that the salvation of Indian Muslims is in pure Indian Nationalism free from any the least tinge of communalism'.<sup>1</sup>

#### **Hasan Imam (1871-1933)**

Hasan Imam, the second son of Imadad Imam and the younger brother of Sir Ali Imam, was born at Neora district Patna on 31st August 1871. He left for England in July 1880 and joined the Middle Temple. He was secretary of the Anjuman Islamiya, a society of Indian students formed by Mazharul Haque. In October 1909 he was elected to Bihar Congress Committee and in the next month he presided over the session of Bihar students conference. Hasan Imam was a judge of Calcutta High Court from 1912 to 1916. On the establishment of Patna High Court there was a proposal for his transfer but the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa opposed it, and he resigned from the judgeship of the Calcutta High Court and started practice in Patna.

He resumed political activities on a larger scale after resigning from judgeship in 1916. He participated in Home Rule Movement and in his presidential address at Bihar Provincial Conference in 1917 he strongly urged the release of Mrs Annie Besant. He presided over the special session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in 1918 to consider Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.

Hasan Imam was a staunch constitutionalist and a social

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<sup>1</sup> Mushirul Hasan (ed) *Muslim and the Congress* Manohar 1979, p. 127

reformist. Presiding over a student conference in 1909 he declared in an inaugural speech that with the depressed classes in a state of servitude and women in a state of hopeless neglect and unreasonable subjection your wheel of progress will run more backward. Hasan was against purdha system.

He joined the civil disobedience movement in 1930 and was elected secretary of the Swadeshi League formed in Patna. He actively campaigned for the boycott of foreign goods and for the use of Khadi.

Hasan Imam was the president of the Board of Trustees of the Bihari, the leading English daily of Bihar and one of the founder members of the Search Light, a daily news paper published from Patna. He died on April 19, 1933.

### **Mazharul Haque (1866-1930)**

Mazharul Haque was born at Bahpur in Patna on 22 December 1866. Haque passed his matriculation examination from Patna Collegiate School in 1886 and studied for a short time in Patna College and Canning College, Lucknow. In May 1887 he proceeded to England where he came in contact with Gandhi, Ali Imam and Sachidanand Sinha. He founded Anjuman Islamia, a popular society of Indian students in England. He was called to the bar in 1891 and returned home the same year. He was appointed a munsif in Awadh but resigned the post in 1896 and started practice at Chapra.

Haque was one of the organizers of Bihar Conference which sought among other things to promote the interest of Biharis. He advocated the formation of Bihar as a separate province with legislative and Executive Councils and a High Court and a university of its own.

He participated in the activities leading to the formation of Muslim League and served it in different capacities. He also presided over its Bombay session in 1918. In all these capacities he served the infant League along healthy nationalist lines. He vehemently opposed the scheme of separate electorate.

When Home Rule League started in Bihar, Haque was very much impressed by it and he was made the president of its provincial branch.

The period of Khilafat and non-cooperation movement (1919-23) constitute the most active period in the life of Mizhauul Haque. In pursuance of the programme of boycotting government education institutions and substituting them by national schools and college he was actively associated with the foundation of Bihar National College in 1925 the Bihar Vidyapith was also established to coordinate the activities of new national institutions in the province and he was elected its Vice-Chancellor. At the same time he established Sadaqut Ashram at Digha which is a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity. Meetings of Khilafat movement were held at the residence of Haque. At his invitation Ali brothers visited Bihar and addressed several meetings.

Soon after the Calcutta session of Congress Sep 4 to 10 Haque and seven others withdraw their candidature from Council election in accordance with a resolution of the Congress. In a letter<sup>1</sup> to the *Search Light* dated 19-9-1920 he said as a Musalman I can never cooperate with the government whose hands are stained with the blood of my countrymen of Punjab. As long as the grievances remain unremedied cooperation is simply out of question. So according to the resolution of Congress I withdraw my candidature from the election.

He threw himself with heart and soul in the movement and there was a sudden change in his mode of living. Sachidanand Sinha referring to this says: "Until he became non-cooperationist he was one of the best dressed Indians. But once he accepted Mahatma's leadership he suddenly became a changed man. He locked up his fastidiously well-tailored suits metamorphosed himself gave up the use of motor car, abjured meat and drink and transformed himself into a veritable recluse."<sup>2</sup>

During the last few years of his life he retired from politics—perhaps disillusioned and sad. The resurgence of communal trouble which he fought boldly and constantly frustrated

1 *Search Light*—Patna dated 19-9-1920

2 Sachidanand Sinha, *Some Eminent Bihar Contemporaries* p. 81-82.

him most. He settled in Faridpur Saran, and died at his home Ashiana on 2 January 1930.

### **Shah Badruddin (1852)**

Shah Badruddin was born on April 18, 1852 in Phulwari Sharif—a place famous for religious and cultural activity for 600 years. Shah Badruddin got his education from his father and his father-in-law Abul Hasan Fad, who was Sajjada Nashin of Khanqah Mujibia. Shah Badruddin succeeded him as Sajjada Nashin and was also elected the Amir of Imarat Shariah in 1921.

The Government honoured him with the title of Shamsul Ulema in Jan. 1915. He however took a leading role in Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements and was the first person to renounce the title of Shamsul Ulema at the call of Mahatma Gandhi. It is said that he got Khadi cloth specially made and to be used for his funeral.

### **Shafi Daudi (1879)**

Shafi Daudi was born in 1879. He matriculated from Chapra High School. After doing B.A. B.L. from Calcutta University he joined practice in Calcutta High Court and later at Patna High Court. But during Non-cooperation Movement in 1920 he suspended his practice. He was sentenced to one year imprisonment on refusing to furnish security. He was very active during Non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. He was secretary of Bihar Khilafat Committee and a member of the Organization Committee founded to advise Provincial Congress Committee.

Bihar Provincial Congress met at Arrah in early Oct. 1921 under the presidentship of Shafi Daudi when a resolution was passed to boycott the visit of Prince of Wales.

He was elected vice-president of Provincial Congress Committee in 1921. He was leader of Bihar Swaraj Party founded by Motilal Nehru and C.R. Das. He fought the election of Muzaffarpur District Board but was defeated on account of the divisions of Congressmen. When the amendments proposed by Jamiatul Ulama and Khilafat Committee to Nehru Report were rejected, he formed an All India Muslim

Conference under the presidentship of the Agha Khan and became its general secretary. He favoured separate electorate and fought for it. During the 1937 elections he formed the Ahrar Party which however was badly defeated and he retired from politics.

### **Pir Mohammed Munis**

Pir Mohammed Munis was a teacher at Bettia Guru Training School and was dismissed from the school for his patriotic activities. He was in close touch with Mahatma Gandhi and first met him in 1916 in Lucknow session of the Congress and his talks with Gandhi led to the latter's visit to Champaran and the launching of Kisan Movement. He worked as a press correspondent for the Pratap of Lucknow and wrote bold columns on Champaran incidents relating to the English planters' cruel treatment of the native farmers.

Pir Mohammed was the pioneer of Hindi journalism and was the first president of Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Bihar.

### **Sir Mohammad Fakhr Uddin (1868-1933)**

Sir Mohammad Fakhr Uddin was born at Dooriva village in Patna district in 1868. He was a brilliant student, did his matriculation from Patna Collegiate School at the age of 17 years and then B.A. B.L. from Patna College in 1893.

Sir Fakhr Uddin joined Patna Bar in April 1893 and soon earned good reputation. He was a government advocate till his appointment as Minister in 1921. He was elected a member of the Legislative Council Bengal in January 1910, also member of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council in 1913. He became a member of reformed Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council in 1921 from Patna Constituency and represented the same constituency thrice. He became Minister for Education Bihar and Orissa in 1921 and remained on the post till 1933. He also held the portfolios of Agriculture, Cooperative and Industries but laid down office due to ill health.

Sir Fakhr Uddin also held many organizational posts. He was secretary, Bihar Provincial Muslim League and a member of Muslim League Committee on Reforms (8th session AIML Bombay Dec 1915-Jan 1916).

He was also a member of Senate and Syndicate of Patna University since its inception. He died in August 1933.

### **Khaja Md Noor (1875)**

Khaja Mohammed Noor was born in 1875 in Haziri Bagh. After graduating in 1901 and obtaining his law degree in 1904, he started practice in Gaya and was elected a member of Bihar Legislative Council in 1913 and remained one till 1922. He was elected chairman of Bihar Legislative Council and he became a judge of Patna High Court in 1931. He was Vice-Chancellor of Patna University from 1934 to 1937.

### **Sir Sultan Ahmad (1880-1963)**

Sultan Ahmad, the second son of Syed Kherat Ahmed, was born in Alinagar Patna on December 24, 1880. His father and elder brother were leading practitioners at Gaya. Sultan Ahmad passed High School from Gaya Zila School in 1897 and studied for over two years in Patna College. He proceeded to England in 1902, joined the Greys Inn and was called to the Bar in 1905. Later he practised in Calcutta High Court.

The public activity of Sir Sultan covers a wide field: legal, educational, constitutional and political. He was a judge of the Patna High Court during 1919-1920 and the first Indian Vice-Chancellor of Patna University. He participated in Round Table Conference in (1930-31). He was appointed a member of Viceroy's Executive Council in 1937. In 1938 he was nominated to temporary vacancy in the Permanent Court of International Justice at Hague. He resigned the post in 1945 and was appointed the advisor of Chamber of Princes in 1947.

Sir Sultan returned to India in 1948 to resume his practice. He died on 27th Feb. 1963.

He was knighted in 1927, received the title of K.C.S. in 1945. Patna University conferred on him honorary degree of Doctor of Law in 1931.

### **Sir Sayyed Fazl Ali (1886-1959)**

Sir Fazl Ali, son of Nazir Ali, was born on September 19, 1886. He got his education in London Mission School Benaras, Queen's College Benaras, Muir Central College Allahabad. He



did his B.A. in 1907 and B.L. at Lincoln Middle Temple London.

He started his practice at Chhara district court in 1912 joined Patna High Court in April 1929. He also acted as Chief Justice in May-July 1938. He was deputed by the Government of Bihar to settle certain industrial disputes in Jamshedpur. He was Chief Justice of Patna High Court from Jan. 1943 to 1947 and was Chairman Royal Indian Navy Mutiny Enquiry Commission in April 1946.

He was also judge of Federal court of India 1947-50 and later of Supreme Court 1950-52. He was Chairman States Reorganization Commission 1954-55. He went to New York U.N. General Assembly in September 1947 and was elected Chairman Fifth Committee of General Assembly during the session.

Sir Fazl Ali was a distinguished jurist. His dissenting judgment in Gopalan's Case on preventive detention and personal liberty is now a classic. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 1956.

### **Shah Mohammad Zubair (1886-1970)**

Shah Mohd Zubair s/o Shah Ashlaque Hussain a zamindar, was born in 1886 in Arwal Village, Gaya. After studying at home and in T.K. Ghosh Academy Patna he proceeded to London in 1909 for higher education and returned in 1912. He settled in Monghyr where he became important in law and politics. He took leading part in Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements. He was imprisoned for two years.

Shah Zubair was one of the members of Organizing Committee for Bihar and Orissa Provincial Congress Committee. He was also elected Chairman of Monghyr District Board.

He was elected to Council of States from the only Muslim seat from Bihar and Orissa in 1926. He was a President of Purulia session of Bihar and Orissa Political Conference in 1928 and resigned from the membership of Council of States on the eve of salt satyagrah in 1930. He died on 14th September 1930 at Monghyr.

### **Abdul Aziz (1885-1948)**

Born in 1885 Patna Abdul Aziz studied in Patna College

and was called to Bar in 1911 by the Middle Temple. He got enrolled in Calcutta High Court in 1915, later in Patna High Court in 1916. He founded Anjuman Islamia Urdu Library and Patna Club. He was returned to Provincial Legislature in 1926 from Patna Division and was Minister of Education Government of Bihar during 1934-37. He was opposed to Nehru Report. In order to fight the election of 1937 he formed the Muslim United Party. He was elected from Patna constituency. He was very popular on account of his polite manners and generosity.

After the formation of the Congress Ministry in 1937 he organized the Muslim League but in 1939 became a minister of Hyderabad State. In 1946 he returned to Bihar, worked for communal harmony. He died in 1948.

#### **Moulana Abul Mohsin Mohd Sajjad (1881-1940)**

Moulana Abul Mohsin Mohd Sajjad was born in 1881 near Biharsharif. He got his primary education in a Madrasa and later studied at Deoband and Allahabad.

After the completion of his education Moulana taught in Madrasa Islamia Bihar. He also established Madrasa Anwarul Uloom in Gaya in 1906. When Jamiatul Ulema was founded in 1920 he became an active member of it. From the platform of Jamiatul Ulema, Khilafat Committee and Imarat Shar'ia he whole heartedly supported the national movement and the Congress for independence of the country.

In 1936 he founded Bihar Muslim Independent Party and in the election his party succeeded in getting 28 seats out of 40 reserved seats for the Muslims. When the Congress refused to form ministry his party was invited and a ministry was formed under the premiership of Mohd Yunus. He remained a member of Jamiatul Ulema's Working Committee for life and in 1940 he was elected its Secretary. He laid the foundation of Imarat Shar'ia in Patna on the advice of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He became the first Naib Amir of Imarat—he held the post till his death. He died in 1940.

Moulana Mohd Sajjad is considered to be the first Muslim who without having English education placed himself on a high rank in Indian politics.

**M. Yunus (1884-1952)**

His early education was in Patna Collegiate School. He went to England in the year 1903 and was enrolled as a member of the Society of Middle Temple on 6th May 1903. During his stay in England he took up journalism and wrote articles. He also visited both north and south America. He was called to the Bar on 26th January 1906 by the Honble Society of Middle Temple and was enrolled as a Barrister of the Honble High Court of Judicature in London on 27th January 1906.

After his return to India he was enrolled at the High Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal in April 1906 and after a short stay in Calcutta he returned to Patna and started practice in the District Court at Patna. Later he worked as a senior in important criminal sessions and divorce cases in Patna High Court in 1935. He appeared in the Dumraon Raj case in the Privy Council. He practised from 1904 to 1944.

Due to his proficiency in Law and mastery over facts and a subtle cross examination he became famous not only in Bihar but also in Bengal and U.P. He started his early public and political life as soon as he joined the Bar. He attended the Indian National Congress in Calcutta in 1906. In 1908 he attended the All India Session of the Indian National Congress at Lahore. Later he was also one of the Secretaries of Muslim League. He submitted his suggestions and was interviewed by Lord Minto at Calcutta and some of his suggestions find place in the Morley Minto Scheme.

He served as one of the City Fathers three times in the Patna City Municipality and introduced many improvements and reforms. In 1916 he contested a bye election for the Imperial Legislative Council in the seat vacated by late Mr Mazharul Haque and was elected. He was further elected as a member of the Bihar and Orissa Provincial Council in 1921 and remained its member with a short break till 1945. His excellent Legislative and Parliamentary work is reflected in questions and speeches in the Legislature. He founded the Patna Times in 1924 a weekly paper which later became a daily. He was Managing Director and Director of the Bihar Provincial Cooperative Bank and Director of the Bank of Bihar.

He founded the Orient Bank of India Ltd. He performed Hajj in 1933. During his pilgrimage to Mecca, he was guest of King Ibn Saud.

In 1936 he formed the Bihar Muslim Independent Party and formed the first Govt. of the Province being the first Prime Minister of Bihar in 1937. He was president of all India Mel Milap Association and O.T. Railwaymen's Union and Vice President of Bihar flying club. During his premiership Urdu became official language. His Ministry was formed of Mr. Abul Wahab Khan Revenue Minister, Mr. Kumar Ajit Prasad Singh Deo Minister of L.S.G. and Babu Guru Dayal Lal Minister River Development.

#### **Kazi Ahmed Hussain (1889-1961)**

Kazi Ahmed Hussain son of Kazi Syed Lateef was born in Konibar village district Gaya in 1889. He was a scholar of Islamic Studies. He participated in Home Rule Movement during the first world war 1916. He was arrested in Gaya in 1921 when he was participating in Non-cooperation Movement.

He was a member of Bihar Legislative Council from 1923 to 1928 and represented Gaya Muslim constituency. He remained a member of AICC from 1926 to 1930. He attended all India Muslim Nationalists Conference, Lucknow in April 1913 and became president of Bihar State Nationalist Muslim Parliamentary Board in 1945. He was also secretary Iqamat Shariat Bihar and Orissa. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha from Bihar during 1952-58 and was re-elected in April 1958.

He was also a good social worker. He worked hard during the earthquake of 1934 and was a member of Bihar Central Relief Committee formed by Dr. Rajendra Prasad. He also worked with Gandhiji to rehabilitate the uprooted Muslims in 1945. He was keenly interested in the movement launched by Maulana Mohammed Ilyas to raise the religious and moral standard of the Muslims. He died on 29 July 1961.

#### **Dr. Syed Mahmud (1889-1971)**

Syed Mahmud son of Mohammed Umar was born in 1889 at Saidpur Bhutia Gazipur district in U.P. He was

lucated at Aligarh in 1911. In 1911  
 he joined the Indian National Congress and  
 worked for it till 1913.

Dr. Mahmud came to Bihar in 1911 for the first time. In Aligarh he was greatly impressed by him and treated him as his younger brother. Later Dr. Mahmud came in contact with Mazharul Haque and married his daughter.

Syza Mahmud practised law in Patna from 1913 to 1921 and entered politics. He was a member of AICC from 1915. He joined Home Rule League in 1917. Later in 1919 gave up practice and joined Khilafat and Non-cooperation movements. He was secretary of Central Khilafat Committee.

In 1923 he became general secretary of AICC. Again in 1926 he was made the secretary of AICC and remained on the post till 1936. He was a strong supporter of Nehru Report.

After the election of 1937 under Government of India Act 1935 he was given important portfolios i.e. Education, Industries, Commerce etc. He was in jail with members of Congress Working Committee in 1942. Again Dr. Mahmud was appointed Minister of Development and Transport in 1946 in Bihar. He worked hard in restoring confidence among the Muslims of Bihar who were highly demoralized due to riot of 1946. When Gandhiji came to restore communal harmony he stayed with Dr. Mahmood. He succeeded in his attempt to bring Muslim League leaders like Jafar Imam, Mazhar Imam, Moulvi Shafi and others to Congress party in order to bring peace and confidence among Muslims. He founded Muslim Mushawarat when communal riots broke out all over the country in 60s. He worked hard in spite of his old age and he succeeded in restoring normalcy. Elected to Lok Sabha in first and second general elections in 1952 and 1957 he was a Minister of State in the ministry of external affairs during 1952-57.

### **Abdu' Bari (1894-1947)**

Professor Abdul Bari, son of Qurban Ali, a police inspector, was born at Koilwar in Shahabad district. He did his M.A. from Patna University in 1919 but could not complete his law course on account of his involvement in Khilafat movement.

Abdul Bari's political activities started with Khilafat and Non cooperation movements. He was the joint secretary of Bihar Provincial Khilafat Committee. He also served as professor in Bihar Vidyalaya in 1921. He was elected secretary Bihar unit of Swaraj Party in 1923 and was also a member of Indian Independence League formed by Nehru and Subash Chandra Bose.

Abdul Bari was elected a member of Bihar Legislative Council but resigned his seat in 1930 in response to the Congress call. He was re-elected in 1937 and became deputy speaker of the Assembly. He was a member of Bihar Satyagrah Committee and participated in the salt Satyagrah and was arrested in April 1932. He was a leading labour leader of Bihar of his time and strong supporter of Nehru Report.

Abdul Bari was one of the moving spirits behind the formation of Bihar Socialist Party in 1934 and was appointed the president of Organising Committee for All India Conference of Socialists held at Patna in 1934. He presided over Bihar Provincial Conference at Masrah Saran district. In 1946 he was elected president of Bihar Provincial Congress Committee. Prof. Bari was murdered on 28th March 1947.

### **Manzoor Ahsan Ajazi**

Moulvi Manzoor Ahsan was born in 1913 at Ajaznagar P. S. Shakra Muzaffarpur.

Freedom fighter in 1913 during college days. Imprisoned for over 13 years at Alipore (W. B.) Agra (U. P.) and other jails of Bihar.

Resigned from Govt. Service on the call of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919 from Pusa Sugarcane Research Institute.

Attended the National Congress at Calcutta when resolution of Non cooperation was passed.

Secretary of All India Khilafat Committee with Ali brothers. Member All India Congress Committee for 27 years. Member of Working Committee of Bihar for 8 years.

Elected Joint Secretary of Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee in the year 1923.

Elected on Congress ticket against Muslim League Elected Chairman of Recent Committee of the First Bihar Political Sufferers Conference under the Presidentship of Late Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

Elected MIA from Patna (Muzaffarpur) constituency, Muzaffarpur

Died on 17th May 1969

One of the founders of PSP Secretary Rejoined the Congress

### **Abdul Ahad Mohammad Noor (1894-1975)**

Born in the year of 1894 at village Madhepuri district Darbhanga now district Madhubani

Education at Madhepuri Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur

Joined non-cooperation movement while a student of G B B. College Muzaffarpur

Settled at Purnea and practised as lawyer there

Became a member of Legislative Council in 1937 and continued as such till 1946

Joined 1942 movement and went underground

Elected member of Bihar Legislative Assembly from Madhepuri in 1946 defeated the Muslim League candidate

Joined Congress ministry in 1946 and became Parliamentary Secretary

Elected to Bihar Legislative Assembly from Baisi constituency in Purnea district in 1952 Elected again from same constituency in 1957 Again elected as member of Bihar Legislative Council in 1962 and became Minister of State He continued as a member of Bihar Legislative Council till 1974

One of the top most leaders of Momin community and Momin Conference which opposed the partition of India on religious basis of Muslim League He was a staunch nationalist muslim who opposed two-nation theory of Mr Jinnah He was an active member of A I C C

He was a member of B P C C Executive Committee and A I C C several terms He was the founder of Weavers Co operative movement in Bihar and established the Bihar

State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Union and many Social and Cultural Organisations

Died in the year of 1975

### **Abdul Qayyum Ansari (1905-73)**

Abdul Qayyum Ansari son of Abdul Haque was born at Dehri District Shahabad on July 1st 1905. He got his early education in Dehri and Sasaram High School. For his higher studies he went to Aligarh Allahabad and Calcutta universities. But his studies were interrupted owing to his involvement in politics.

At the age of 14 he got involved in politics when he was in high school of Sasaram. Ali brothers paid a visit there and Ansari got the opportunity of meeting them and when the local Khilafat Committee was organized he was appointed the General Secretary.

In 1920 at a special session of Congress of Calcutta Qayyum Ansari represented his area and met Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. He was arrested in 1922 for taking part in non-cooperation movement.

He served Indian National Congress in different capacities ranging from secretaryship of Shahabad D C C to the presidency of B P C C. He was also president of AICC Working Committee.

Abdul Qayyum Ansari wholeheartedly opposed the separatist tendency of Muslim League, opposed the formation of Pakistan and fought against the Muslim League within the Momins Conference as well as outside it. Abdul Qayyum's great contribution lies in organizing and promoting the educational and economic status of the Momins. He gave leadership to Momins Conference in the capacity of its chairman till his death—1973. It was he who got Momins included in Backward Annex II which entitled them to enjoy all the facilities given to backward class.

He had a long and distinguished career as a legislator and minister. He was first elected to Bihar Assembly in 1946 and was a member of Bihar Council of Ministers almost continuously in the Congress Ministry until his death.



He was Congress nominee from Bihar to the Constituent Assembly and served on its advisory committee on Fundamental Rights and minorities and tribals. He was also a member of Backward Class Commission appointed by Government of India in 1953-55.

Qayyum Ansari was also associated with several other public activities. He was was the president of Bihar Jamiatul Mominin 1938-48 and of All India Momin Talimi Fund and the Vice-President of All India Backward Class Federation in 1954. He led the delegations of National Cooperative Union as its President to the 21st International Cooperative Congress held at Lausanne (Switzerland) in 1961. He died suddenly after heart attack on January 18, 1973 when he was Minister for Jails in Bihar Government.

Qayyum Ansari did pioneering work for the social and economic regeneration of the Momins. He also formulated six points programmes demanding separate representation for the Momin community in all cabinets and legislatures in local bodies and in state and semi state services. He was president Bihar Provincial Jamiat ul Mominin 1938-47, presided over the first session of Bihar Provincial Momin Conference 1940, was President All India Momin Conference from 1947, President All India Momin Talimi Fund from 1969, Chairman Bihar State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Weavers Spinning Mills, President All India Handloom Weavers Conference from 1955, President All India Backward Muslim Federation for 1952, member Backward Class Commission, Government of India 1953-55.

### **Abdus Sami Nadvi (1913)**

Born in the year 1913 in Mohalla Maharaj Ganj Town Darbhanga.

Primary education at home. Secondary education Madrasa Imdadiah Laheriasarai.

The family being nationalist, he was not allowed to have education through English medium, Higher education through Arabic language at Nadavatul Ulema University Lucknow. Ph. D. degree through Arabic language in Oriental Philosophy in the year 1935.

Joined Indian National Congress in the year 1933 and took active part in the 1934 earthquake relief operations organised by the I N C under the Banner of Kasturba relief fund

He was elected a member of Darbhanga District Board in the year 1939 and served there till quit India movement was launched in the year 1942 and courted arrest with all the male members of the family

Served as General Secretary of Darbhanga District Congress Committee from 1948 for 5 years

He was elected a member of the Bihar Legislative Assembly in the year 1950

He was again elected a member of Bihar Assembly in the year 1952 on Congress ticket from Jalliy constituency in Darbhanga district

He was elected a member of Bihar Legislative Council in the year 1969

He has been elected member of the Bihar Assembly from Darbhanga constituency in 1980

He was President of the Darbhanga District Congress Committee since May 1976

Member Bihar Pradesh Congress Committee since 1938

He served all India Momin Conference as General Secretary under late Abdul Qayyum Ansari then President for full term and again as Vice President with Mr Ziaur Rehman Ansari for his full term as President

He served the Bihar State Handloom Weavers Co operative Union as a member on the Board of Directors for 25 years of Handloom Union later for 3 year as honorary Secretary and also Director Bihar State Co operative Federation for 4 years

### **Shafiqullah Ansari (1917 1980)**

Shafiqullah Ansari was born in 1917 at Bhawarti in Madhubani district. He belonged to a very religious family and got his early education in family itself and later took admission in a Madrasa and passed examination of Alim.

In 1937 for the first time Momin Conference was held in Darbhanga and Shafiqullah was attracted to the idea of social service. He joined a middle school as head maulvi where he learnt Hindi and English.

He took very active part in Momin Conference held in Madhubani in 1941 and he built a Momin Hall in Madhubani with public contributions. In 1947 he was elected a member of Darbhanga District Board. In 1955 he became a municipal Commissioner of Madhubani Municipality and from 1957 to 61 he was Vice Chairman of this municipality. In 1962 he was elected to the Legislative Assembly and in 1967 despite the unfavourable condition of Congress in the election he defeated a formidable opposition Leader Suraj Narain Singh Chairman of PSP. But Shafiqullah was defeated in 1969 in midterm poll and in 1972 he was nominated to Bihar Legislative Council through the efforts of Qayyum Ansari.

Shafiqullah was also a director of Bihar State Cooperative Bank and honorary Secretary of Handloom Weaver Cooperative Union and a member of the Working Committee of Momin Conference. Shafiqullah fought parliamentary election of 1977 but lost to a J P candidate Hulam Singh Yadav. Again he fought the election in 1980 and was successful. He died within two months of his success.

### **Jafar Imam (1903-1979)**

Born at Bahpur Patna, in 1903 Jafar Imam studied at Aligarh and Calcutta and got his B.A. and Law degrees at Patna. He practised law in Patna High Court and was elected a municipal commissioner of Patna in 1935.

He started as a member of the Independent party under the inspiration of Moulana Sajjad but later joined the Muslim League in 1937. He was elected a member of the Bihar Assembly in 1940 and again in 1946 in the Muslim League ticket and a member of the constituted Assembly of India. After partition he joined the Congress party and rose to be cabinet minister in the K.B. Sahay ministry during 1963-67. He also served the cause of Urdu from the platform of Bihar Rayasti Taraqui Urdu led by Md. Ayub. He died in 1979.

### **Abul Hayat Chand (1914-1958)**

Born in 1914 village Rahi Bikram, Purnia s/o Saeed Shalid Husain Abul Hayat Chand joined Kisan Sabha movement in 1938 later joined the Congress and Congress Socialist party. He was active in Quit India movement 1942 absconded for one year and was later caught and imprisoned for three years. He served as General Secretary of Provincial Congress Committee in 1946 with Prof. Bari as its President. He left the Congress in 1952 became President of the PSP in 1952 and was elected MLC in 1952 and in 1957. He died in 1958 as a very prominent leader of PSP.

### **Ahad Fatmi (1915-1980)**

Ahad Fatmi was born on April 30 1915 in Yahyapur village near Maner.

Ahad Fatmi started his public career with Kisan Sabha. The famous Kisan Sabha leader Swami Shahja Nanda Ashram was situated near his home town so he came in his contact and through the Kisan platform he came close to Jaya Prakash Narayana later became member of Congress Socialist Party. He remained in the party so long as Jaya Prakash Narayana was associated with it. From 1936 he was considered to be a prominent socialist leader of Bihar. In 1942 Quit India movement he was arrested under DIR when he was returning from the Bombay session of AICC and released on health ground after 3 years when his physical condition deteriorated.

Ahad Fatmi was very close to Jaya Prakash Narayana and Vinoba Bhave and took leading part in Bhoodan movement. He was editor of Bhoodan Tahreek the mouthpiece of Bhoodan movement in Urdu.

Ahad Fatmi was also active in J P Movement of 1974. He died on Jan 2 1980.

Ahad Fatmi was a journalist of excellence. He was also the author of a dozen books concerning Socialist and Bhoodan Movement.

### **Mohammed Ayub**

Md Ayub s/o Moulvi Abdul Ghani born in 1910 came from village Sahepur Chandi Patna. He did social work in

Calcutta riots in 1946. He was a successful lawyer but a greater social worker. Finding that Anjuman-e-Tarique-e-Urdu controlled by Qazi A. Waidood was not a broad based organisation, he set up a separate Riyasati Anjuman-e-Tarique-e-Urdu in which representatives of all parties were brought together. Through this institution Ayub organised a team of workers dedicated to Urdu cause and Muslim education and ran its branches in the districts of Bihar. He collected 25000 signatures for making Urdu the second language. He donated his entire property to educational institutions especially Millat College of Darbhanga and Ayub Girls High School which stands as a great monument to this selfless social worker. He died in 1964 and judging from the size of his funeral procession it would appear that he was the most beloved leader among the Muslims.

#### **Zawar Hussain (1916-80)**

Zawar Hussain was born at village Hussainganj, Surn on Feb 2 1916. He did high school from Chapra Zila School and later studied at Patna College and Patna Law College. He became Chairman of the District Board in 1957 and remained on this post till 1961. He was chairman of Bihar State Secondary Education Committee in 1962 and of the University Reform Commission Bihar. He remained Chairman of Bihar School Examination Board from 1963 to 1970. He was the treasurer of Patna University, became Vice Chancellor of Magadh University in 1969 and Bihar University in 1972. He was also a member of Bihar Legislative Assembly during 1957-66, 1967-68 and 1969-72. He was appointed Minister of Finance in 1969, again in 1974 - Minister of Education in 1971. In Dec 1975 he was elected to Rajya Sabha. He died in 1980.

#### **Abdul Ghafoor (1919)**

Abdul Ghafoor was born on 1919 in Sareyht Ahtiyar village Gopalganj. After school education he went to Aligarh Muslim University and did M.A. and LL.B. from there. While he was in Aligarh he came under the influence of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose and established himself as a nationalist student leader in the hey day of Muslim League in Aligarh. He was jailed for two years following Quit India Movement. Mr Ghafoor

moved a historic resolutions demanding deletion of Hindu and Muslim from Benaras and Aligarh universities at All India Students Conference in 1937

Abdul Ghafoor was a legislator for 15 years having been first elected to State Assembly in 1952. Mr Ghafoor was Deputy Minister in the ministry of Vinod and Iha and Shoshit Dal Ministry headed by Bhola Paswan Shastri in 1969. He became chairman of V dhan Parishad in 1972.

He was Bihar's chief minister from July 1973 to April 1975. He became the main target of J P movement of 1974 which ultimately led to imposition of the Emergency.

### **Maulana Usman Ghani (1896-1977)**

Maulana Usman Ghani was born on January 1, 1896 at Deora Gaya. After getting his early education in Urdu and Persian at home, he went to Deoband where he got the degree of Fazil. At Deoband he was close to Maulana Ubedullah Sindhi, a revolutionary leader, and actively cooperated with him in the promotion of Jamiatul Ansar. He returned from Deoband in 1918.

One of the organizers of Jamiatul Ulema in Bihar, he remained a member of its Central Committee for life. He was active during non-cooperation and Khilafat movements. He wrote two books—Tareke Mawalat and Jureme Yazid—which was banned by the British Government.

When Imarat Sharia was founded in Bihar, he was elected its Secretary and he settled in Phulwari Sharif. He was an editor of 'Imarat fortnightly magazine. He also served as Mufti of Imarat Sharia.

He cooperated with Maulana Sajjad in forming Muslim Independent party of Bihar. A bitter opponent of the British Raj and a nationalist leader, he turned out to be a critic of the Congress government after independence—and advised Muslims to vote for the candidates who could be useful to them—on secular and not on religious grounds. Thus he contributed to the secularization of the Muslim politics and this was a stand specially welcomed by the opposition parties.

He raised his voice against the atrocities of Bihar Muslims in Bangladesh and during the emergency of 1975 he opposed forcible sterilization. He died on 31 Dec. 1977.

### **Ghulam Sarwar (1926)**

Ghulam Sarwar is a well known politician, son of Mr. Abdul Hamid, a deputy collector, was born on 10th January 1926 in Begusarai. He did his M.A. and B.Ed. from Patna University.

He started his public life as member of Muslim youth in 1945, was associated with Muslim League but returned to India and decided to serve the down-trodden Muslims from the platform of Urdu. So he started editing 'Nawabism' and later established 'Hilq-e-Adab Bihar' which was converted into 'Reyasat Anjuman-e-Tarqi-e-Urdu'.

He is the champion of the Urdu cause. His newspaper 'Sangam' is read widely and no Urdu paper of Bihar has more circulation than 'Sangam'. Patna.

He has deep sympathy with the problems of Muslims during the Bihar Muslim crisis in Bangladesh. He actively campaigned for the defence of the Biharis in Bangladesh. He organized 'Urdu Bahini' for which he was jailed in March 1972.

He was a most active Muslim leader associated with the J.P. Movement in Bihar.

In 1977 State Assembly elections he won the Siwan seat and was made minister for Secondary Education. As a Minister he gave considerable attention to the reform in Madrasa education of Bihar. He created an autonomous Madrasa Education Board and gave recognition to the degree of madrasa education. He sent his resignation letter to the Chief Minister on the failure of the government in Jamshedpur riots. In his resignation letter he wrote that the government which cannot protect the life and property of minorities has no right to stay. I am hereby resigning from the ministry. He was defeated in 1980 Assembly elections by a candidate of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

### Taqi Rahim (1921)

Taqi Rahim was born in 1921 at Behrwan Patna into a peasant family

He started his political career with Muslim Independent Party in 1937. He joined Muslim League but later came closer to the Communist party. He was a prominent worker of CPI of Patna District. When CPI was divided he became one of the prominent organizers of CPI (M). He attended as a delegate the 7th Congress of CPI (M) held at Calcutta. He remained a member of state Committee and state secretariat of the CPI (M).

He left CPI (M) on account of difference with the CPI (M) policy regarding the issue of Bihari Muslims of Bangladesh. He mobilized public opinion of Biharis against the atrocities committed on Bihari Muslims in Bangladesh. He organized Marxist Coordination Committee and supported J P movement of 1974 from this platform. He was instrumental in initiating and organizing students movement in 1973 which later turned into the J P movement. He became the ~~vice~~ chairman of Minority Commission Bihar in the Janta government.

He also worked tirelessly for communal harmony in Bihar. He worked with Gulam Sarwar in getting Urdu declared second official language of Bihar by such policies as mobilized public opinion of non Urdu mass in favour of Urdu. He is a prominent leader of Kisan Sabha also.

